













**THE SPIRIT OF GOETHE'S FAUST.**



THE SPIRIT OF  
GOETHE'S FAUST.

• BY

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UNBESUSSTEN."



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TO  
THE BELOVED AND REVERED MEMORY  
OF  
A. S.



## PREFACE.

THE present volume consists of a course of popular lectures, and presupposes no previous knowledge of its subject. Description therefore naturally forms a large part of the contents, and matters of special criticism are relegated to footnotes. The object I have in view is to excite an intelligent interest in Goethe's work *as a whole*, to stimulate, rather than to satisfy, curiosity. The time, in my opinion, is not yet ripe in this country for a professedly critical work on "Faust." What is most needed, in England at least, is more *readers* of "Faust," not more critics. In Germany, owing to a special privilege, the case is somewhat different,—I allude to the representation on the stage of the two parts of "Faust." Scholars, accordingly, may always there be sure of a public when addressing themselves to points of detail, or in handling fundamental questions relating to the origin and minute structure of the work. For those who wish to go further in their studies I have occasionally indicated



sources of formation, but these hints are scattered, and I make no pretence in this small volume to address the forum of trained investigators. It will not escape the eyes of the latter, should they honour me with any notice at all, that my own standpoint is eclectic or compromising. I frankly own that continued study has affected a strong early opinion of the integrity of the work. But while unable any longer to see with the enthusiastic eyes of a Herman Grimm, I cannot go the lengths of Wilhelm Scherer and the disintegrating school. There is, I believe, sufficient evidence of singleness of purpose throughout, but in a production occupying so many years of life, the author's mind was open to fresh suggestions that led to obvious gaps and unmistakable inconsistencies.

Again, I find much that is valuable in each class of commentator, the realist and the speculative. But it is possible to be too matter-of-fact, as it is possible to be too profound. No genuine poet plans a metaphysic or sociology, and then sits down to make a body for his abstractions; nor will the supreme artist paint a picture that tells no story but that of the artist's skill in reproducing what is patent to the eye of the casual beholder. Goethe, it is certain, both *saw* and *thought* at once, and it is idle to ask which in "Faust" predominates, the accurate word-painting of the struggles and stumblings of actual men and

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women, or the darkly-suggested truth that lurks behind all the natural symbolism of human actions and world-events.

I have only one word still to say, with regard to quotations of the poem. I have not attempted to the slightest extent to add to the number of existing excellent translations. My selections have been made chiefly from the renderings of Bayard Taylor and Miss Swanwick, of both of which I have expressed admiration in terms sufficiently clear. I have usually noted my indebtedness by an S. or a T. respectively. I cherish the hope, however, that my little sketch will send some of my readers to the original, when they will be soothed and elevated by a music that haunts the mind as no foreign tones ever can.

W. C. COUPLAND.

*November 11, 1884.*



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# THE SPIRIT OF GOETHE'S "FAUST."

## I.

### THE "FAUST" LEGEND AND ITS ANTECEDENTS.

THE object of the present course of lectures is to afford some assistance to those who are desirous of understanding the drift of a book which is far from being plain to the merely "running" reader. I shall consider that I am addressing English students exclusively, and make my quotations always from translations; but, of course, I need hardly say that those who are able to read "Faust" in the original will be impressed by the poem as a work of art in a way that no foreign version, however faithful, can impress them. Of such renderings there is already a small library, and I am almost afraid to select any one for special commendation, lest it be thought I undervalue others. Of translations of the *whole* of Goethe's "Faust" there are, however, not many; and of these

*complete* translations I have little scruple in singling out those by the American author Bayard Taylor and Miss Swanwick. Both translators, moreover, have adopted what I conceive the right principle of adhering to the original metres, and I hardly know to which version I should award the palm.<sup>1</sup> Presuming a portion of my audience at least to be wholly unacquainted with the German language, I shall carefully avoid discussions of a merely philological nature. In brief, these lectures will be in no sense academical or distinctly critical. My object is simply to endeavour to waft to others what has come to me of the spirit of Goethe's greatest achievement.

My own admiration for that achievement is so considerable that I am afraid to trust myself to give expression to it in a few sentences, for fear of being thought a blind enthusiast. If this admiration peeps out betimes, and seems to savour of the hyperbolical, I can only plead, Wait—wait till the work has been read, interpreted, and carefully meditated. But please to observe that it is not I, nor a patriotic Teuton, but a foreign poet, and that no mean one, the American Bryant, who asserts “‘Faust’ is the masterpiece of

<sup>1</sup> There is a great deal to be said in favour of Dr. Anster's performance, but although, owing to the writer's command of language, the effect produced is often most pleasing, the liberties taken with the original pass all legitimate bounds. See also App. A.

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German and European literature of the last two centuries.”<sup>1</sup>

• If the greatness of a work is to be measured by the criticism it evokes, then certainly the “Faust” of Goethe has few rivals. Although but fifty years have elapsed, the literature that has already gathered round this one work has become formidable even to the ardent student, and the same care is now bestowed upon each line of the original as upon an ancient classic.

• I must not conceal from you that, although the records of Goethe’s literary activity are unusually ample, differences of opinion which may be called fundamental obtain among the most profound students of “Faust.” The relation of the first part to the second, the relation of the several scenes to one another, the author’s design as regards the whole and single portions, are still subjects of keen debate. There is a school of critics which maintains that “Faust” is as much a work of shreds and patches as recent critics hold the “Iliad” to be (a view favoured by the fact that its composition was frequently intermitted during sixty years of the author’s life, contradicted, however, by the plainest statements of the author, himself); while others seem to see no force in Goethe’s striking

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Von Loeper in his commentary, from a number of the “New York Evening Post” for 1856. I have been unable myself to obtain a sight of this journal for that year.



confession that he himself never read through the second part in the order in which it was destined to be printed, which was far from being the order in which it was composed. Again, there is the strife between the admirers of the first and disparagers of the second part, and those who refuse to separate the two parts, as regards either the theme or poetic worth. Curiously enough, too, there are some who think the first part perfectly intelligible, the second almost wholly incomprehensible, and others who think it is the first part that most requires elucidation. What has given rise to these last-mentioned diversities of opinion is chiefly the circumstance that many minds have associated Goethe's "Faust" too closely with its precursors, and taken for granted that it must be a play intended for the stage, like, *e.g.*, the "Faustus" of Marlowe. But it is here overlooked that the first part is not divided into acts and scenes in the fashion of stage-plays, while, on the other hand, the second part, which was erewhile regarded as a flesh-and-bloodless allegory, has been of late repeatedly put on the stage, and with marked success, in the chief towns of Germany.<sup>1</sup> The true parallel to "Faust" is to be found in the old mystery-plays, and it might not inaptly be styled the mystery-play of the nineteenth century. The

<sup>1</sup> Hamburg, Berlin, Weimar, Frankfurt, Mannheim, Vienna, &c. Read K. J. Schröder's pamphlet, "Die Aufführung des ganzen Faust auf dem Wiener Hofburgtheater. 1883."

depreciators of the second part, it may be remarked, are now almost silenced in Germany, and a defence of its artistic worth is no longer required.

I propose to occupy the present lecture in giving a brief account of Goethe's predecessors in the same field of literary effort, and in tracing the growth of the story which has served as scaffolding for the poet's grand ideas.

Those who are acquainted with Calderon's remarkable drama, "The Wonder-working Magician," composed 1637, must have been struck by its resemblance in certain important particulars to the "Faust" tragedy of Goethe.<sup>1</sup> Yet we know from his own statements that Goethe was totally unacquainted with the production of the Spanish poet until the first part of his own work was completed,<sup>2</sup> and on the other hand there is no evidence, and indeed the greatest improbability, that Calderon had ever heard of Dr. Faustus. We are driven, therefore, to the conclusion that the Faust legend which is perpetuated in Goethe's masterpiece and the story immortalized by Calderon have a com-

<sup>1</sup> Cyprian's thirst for perfect knowledge; appearance of the Demon as he is absorbed in a mystical passage of Pliny concerning the Supreme God; the magical presentation of the eidolon of Justina; the compact of the Demon written in blood, &c.

<sup>2</sup> He read the "Magico Prodigioso" in Einsiedel's translation in 1812. Before 1790 (date of publication of first fragment of "Faust") Calderon was merely a name to him.

mon spiritual origin, the form differing according as it was fashioned under Southern and Catholic influences or was moulded in the colder and more bracing air of Northern Protestantism.

Calderon probably took his theme from a collection of religious histories famous in the Middle Ages, the "*Legenda Aurea*," edited by Jacobus de Voragine. One of those golden legends bore the title, "*De Sancta Justina Virgine*," being a Latinized version of portions of an anonymous sacred romance composed in the fourth century of our era. This sacred romance may be shortly described as the "*Legend of Cyprian and Justina*." It tells the story of a heathen sage of Antioch, who, having attained considerable skill in the black art, was induced by a youth named Aglaïdas to put the same in practice in order to compel a Christian maiden, Justina, who had taken the vow of chastity, to reciprocate his affection. Cyprian first summons two devils in succession, who vainly try to instil love-longings into the girl's heart, but are cowed by her breathing on them and making the sign of the cross, and then evokes the Lord of Hell himself. But he too is routed by the same all-conquering symbol, whereupon Cyprian demands of the defeated Devil the cause of his unsuccess; this is refused, until the magician agrees to become the perpetual slave of the Prince of Darkness. The terms accepted, the Devil reveals that the sign of the cross made by

the virgin has frustrated his infernal machinations. "Then," says Cyprian, "I too will earnestly endeavour to become the friend of the Crucified." The Devil threatens and reminds him that he has sworn perpetual submission to himself, whereupon Cyprian makes use of the weapon put so heedlessly into his hands, frames the sign of the cross, and the Devil departs howling. The upshot of the story is, that Cyprian is baptized and suffers martyrdom in the persecution of Decius (or Diocletian) along with Justina.<sup>1</sup> In Calderon the story is so far altered that Cyprian is not at first a magician, but simply a daring philosopher, who summons a demon to teach him the black art, in order to obtain for himself the Christian maiden Justina. Here too the Devil loses his prey, his pupil repudiating his own act and deed on finding that the demon's power can only bring him a phantom Justina. The unlooked-for *dénouement* of the Antiochian bargaining seems to have taught the unsuspecting Prince of Evil a lesson in worldly wisdom, for a legendary history of the sixth century describes an attempt on the part of Satan to leave no loophole for the escape of his perfidious prey.

About the middle of the tenth century Hroswitha, a nun of the convent of Gandersheim, wrote a dramatic

<sup>1</sup> For full text and literary history of this romance, see Zahn's monograph, "Cyprian von Antiochien." Erlangen, 1882.

poem based on the story of the monk Theophilus. Theophilus was in A.D. 538 Oeconomus of the Church of Adana in Cilicia, but on the death of his superior refused to be made a bishop. The successor to the see, for some unexplained reason, deprived him of the office of Oeconomus, and Theophilus betook himself to magic arts in order to recover his position. But the Devil will not grant him his aid unless he bequeaths his soul to him by a written bond [not with blood before the thirteenth century]. This is done, but the erring monk finally repents, and calls upon Mary, the Mother of Christ, who pities his condition, and entering into a contest with Satan, compels the latter to relinquish his claim.

Did time serve, I might trace these legends to still earlier forms, to the apocryphal Acts of the Apostle Paul and Thekla and the strange figure of Simon Magus, but enough has been detailed to enable you to see the characters of the later, and to us more familiar version, in early Christian guise. The influence is unmistakable of these pious fictions of the early Church on the Protestant legend to which we now pass, a legend which, although sufficiently naïve in its beginnings, was destined to acquire a profounder significance than that which the genius of Hroswitha or Calderon could impart to it. In one point the older stories differ from the new. Cyprian and Justina certainly, and also Theophilus in all proba-

bility, are wholly mythical characters ; but there really was a man Faust, although the nucleus of fact is small indeed compared with the accretion of fable.

We meet with the name of "Faust" for the first time in a letter written [in Latin] by Johannes Trithemius, abbot of the monastery of Sponheim, to the mathematician and astronomer Johann Virdung, of Hasfurt, dated August the 20th, 1507. Trithemius says :—"The man of whom you wrote to me, Georgius Sabellicus, who has dared to call himself *the prince of necromancers*, is a vagabond, vain babbler and vagrant [*gyrographus, battologus et circumcellio*], who deserves to be chastised, that he may not henceforward venture to publicly profess principles odious and contrary to the Holy Church. . . . This is how he calls himself—*Magister Georgius Sabellicus, Faustus junior, fons Necromanticorum, astrologus, magus secundus, chiromanticus, aeromanticus, pyromanticus, in hydra arte secundus*.<sup>1</sup> . . . . When last year I was re-

<sup>1</sup> This astonishing card calls for comment and elucidation. Was *Sabellicus* a baptismal name of the individual alluded to, or an assumed epithet? The ancient Sabines were noted for their supposed powers of enchantment, a Sabellian woman being equivalent to a prophetess, &c. If the genuine surname, it would seem to indicate an Italian origin for the individual in question. As such the name was not unknown at the time. A Venetian historian and poet was named M. A. Sabellico.

The same question may be raised with regard to *Faustus* (Lat. "happy" or "fortunate"). W. Creizenach ("Allgemeine

turning from the March Brandenburg I met this same man at the town of Geilenhusen . . . . who, as soon as he heard I was there, fled from the hostelry, and could not be persuaded by any one to present himself to my view. Some priests of the town told me he boasted in the presence of several people that he had obtained so great a knowledge and memory of all wisdom that if all the works of Plato and Aristotle had totally perished from the memory of men, he himself, like another Hebrew Ezra, could restore the whole with greater elegance. . . . He is reported to have said in the presence of several bystanders that the miracles of our Saviour Christ were not to be wondered at, as he could perform the same miracles when and wheresoever he pleased."

The next notice is couched in language hardly more complimentary. In a letter written by Conrad Mudt, a canon of Gotha, dated October 3, 1513, we read:—

Deutsche Biographie," Bd. vi., 1877), taking Sabellicus to be the true surname, says: "sicher ist, dass Faustus nur ein Beinamen ist, den sich Sabellicus zulegte."

Who was Faustus *senior*? Fust the printer? or the Faustus of the Simon Magus legend, on which something will be said later on? The first supposition finds but little support; the latter strikes me as far-fetched. There might be something, however, in referring the *magus primus* to Simon of the old legend.

*In hydra arte secundus.* It has been suggested that the hydro-mantic first was Pythagoras. *Vide* Augustine's "De Civitate Dei," vii., 35.

“Eight days ago there came to Erfurt a Professor of Palmistry, named Georgius Faustus Hemitheus, Hedebergensis,<sup>1</sup> a braggart and a fool. His art, as that of all diviners, is vain, and such physiognomic science lighter than a water-bug [*levior typula*]. The vulgar are lost in admiration. Let theologians rise against him.”

Philipp Begardi, physician of Worms, adopts the same tone as Trithemius and Mutianus in “Index Sanitatis” (1539). He says Faust called himself “philosophus philosophorum,” and cheated many people of their money.

In the third edition of the “Table-Talk” of Johann Gast, a Protestant theologian (published 1548), we find the following bit of personal experience:—“I supped with him at Basle, in the large college; he had given the cook various kinds of birds to roast; where he had bought them or who had given them to him I know not, since they were not sold at that time at Basle, and were such as I have never seen in our country. He led about with him a dog and a horse, devils in my opinion [*satanas fuisse reor*], who

<sup>1</sup> i.e. either demigod of Heidelberg, if with Düntzer we correct Hedebergensis into Hedelbergensis, or (as Hermann Grimm suggests), “demigod à la Heidenberg,” with allusion to the magical repute of Trithemius, whose family-name was Von Heidenberg. Grimm suggests that Mutianus, in order to give Trithemius a thrust, characterized Faust as demigod à la Heidenberg.



were ready to obey all his orders. *Certain persons assured me* that the dog sometimes took the form of a servant, and brought him his food. The wretched man had a sad end, for the devil strangled him, and his corpse, though placed five times on the back, always turned over again with the face downward. The Lord preserve us, lest we become slaves of Satan ! ”

Johann Memel or Manlius, of Anspach, a pupil of the reformer Melanchthon, speaks of Faust as personally known to him,<sup>1</sup> says he was born at Kundling, and that he studied at the University of Cracow, where he learned magic. “He was a vagrant scholar, and said many mysterious things. When he was at Venice he told the people he would fly to heaven.”<sup>2</sup> The Devil lifted him up a little way and then dropped him, so that he was taken up half-dead.<sup>3</sup> A few years ago the same John Faust sat, exceeding sad, in a certain village in the Duchy of Würtemberg. The innkeeper asked him why he was so sad beyond his wont. . . . Faust answered, ‘Do not disturb me this night.’ In the middle of the night the house

<sup>1</sup> Manlius is the first to call him Johannes instead of Georgius Sabellicus.

<sup>2</sup> Query—constructed a flying-machine?

<sup>3</sup> Simon Magus undertook, in Rome, to fly in the presence of Nero, and was lifted up by and thrown down by the Devil. See “Gutenberg, Geschichte und Erdichtung,” von A. v. d. Linde, p. 295.

was violently shaken. Faust not rising in the morning, the innkeeper and others entered his room, and found him lying near the bed, face downward, thus slain by the Devil."

Wäer, a doctor of medicine of Teklenburg, who died 1588, in his "*De Praestigiis Daemonum*,"<sup>1</sup> states that Faust excited considerable attention towards the end of the third decade of the century, and relates a story which he professed to have from the sufferer. At Batenburg on the Maas, Faust being in durance vile for a time on account of some unmentioned iniquity, induced the prison chaplain to procure him some wine on pretence of revealing a means by which he could shave without a razor. This was to rub his beard with arsenic. The consequence was, not only the beard, but also his skin and flesh were removed.

All the foregoing statements are from persons who might have seen Faust in the flesh, and they are all that we have of unquestioned authority by contemporary writers.

At one of the autumn fairs held at Frankfort towards the close of the sixteenth century, there appeared a book (in German) the title-page of which

<sup>1</sup> There are copies of two editions of this work in the British Museum, viz., of the third, 1566, and sixth, 1583. The former of these contains no reference to Faust, but the story in the text is said to be found in the edition issued in 1568 ("*Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*," Bd. vi., 1877, p. 587).

ran as follows :—" History of D. Johann Faust, the far-renowned enchanter and black artist. How he made a compact with the Devil for a specified time; what strange things he saw and himself contrived during the same, until at last he received his well-deserved reward. Extracted in great part from his own literary remains, now methodically arranged and printed, for the instruction, awful example and earnest warning of all presumptuous, over-curious and impious folk. ' Submit yourselves therefore to God.'—James iv. ' Resist the devil and he will flee from you.' *Cum gratia et privilegio.* Printed at Frankfurt-on-the-Main, by Johannes Spies. 1587." Whatever else may be said about the book, it was certainly a lucky hit in a trade point of view, for a new (altered) edition appeared in the following year, and a third (further changed) in 1589.<sup>1</sup> Only one perfect copy of the original edition is known to exist, in the possession of Heinrich Hirzel, bookseller, Leipzig. An accurate reprint was published in 1878, edited by W. Braune and Prof. F. Zarncke.

The author affirms on the title-page, and from time to time in the body of the work, that he has had access to Faust's manuscripts. The book consists of sixty-eight chapters, and is divided into three parts. In Part I. we have the account of the birth, education

<sup>1</sup> Spies, however, only published *two* editions in all.

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and infernal pact. Part II. contains conversations with the Evil Spirit concerning the physical world and other matters, a trip to the infernal regions, journey through the heavens and over a large part of the globe. Part III., adventures of Faust at various courts and elsewhere, and miserable latter end. The writer of this book tells us on his title-page why he writes it (and his preface enlarges on the topic), namely, to deter all inclined to dabble with forbidden arts of the natural consequences of their impious propensities. The narrative is garnished with pious reflections, but they are often so quaint that the most secular reader will not be offended by their introduction.

Doctor Faustus is stated to be the son of a poor peasant of Roda, near Weimar. He had the good fortune to be patronized by a well-to-do kinsman living at Wittenberg, who offered to maintain him at the University. He was accordingly enrolled in the theological faculty, and soon shot ahead of his comrades, passing a very brilliant examination for the degrees of Master and Doctor of Theology. But, alas! having learnt all that the divines had to teach him, he was not content to go on grinding in the theological mill. He had "a foolish, unreasonable brain. Men called him the 'Speculator.'" And the day came when he dared to put the sacred writings "behind his door and hide them away under his bench,

and he lived wicked and godless. But the proverb is true, 'What will to the Devil that cannot be kept from him!'" He was even so captivated by his secular studies that he refused to be called any longer "theologian." "He became a man of the world, called himself doctor of medicine, and became an astrologer and mathematician." In the expressive words of the legend, "he took to himself eagle's wings and would scale all the heights of heaven and earth." Worst of all, he devoted himself to the study of magic. One dark night, in the Spesser forest, in the neighbourhood of Wittenberg, he resolved to make trial of this forbidden instrument, and drawing a circle, invoked the Powers of Evil. All sorts of dreadful phenomena occur, and then a grey monk appears, who promises to repeat his visit the next night in Faust's own house. The second interview is of short duration, but on the third occasion there follows the conclusion of the bargain. The spirit, not the Devil himself, but Mephostophiles,<sup>1</sup> a servant of Lucifer, requires a bond, written with Faust's own blood. He engages to comply with all Faust's future requests, whether for information or enjoyment, provided the latter consents to renounce the Christian creed, never to contract lawful marriage, and, after the lapse of twenty-four years, to hand himself over to the Enemy

<sup>1</sup> This name has not been proved to occur in any earlier book.

of Mankind, to be dealt with as the latter will to all eternity. The reckless Faust signs the bond. As the book says, "he thought the Devil was not as black as he was painted, nor Hell as hot as people fancied it." Before Faust has delivered the deed to Mephostophiles, the cautious fiend requires him to make a copy of it, and the narrator professes to have had this document before him in drawing up the present reliable history. All being arranged in proper legal fashion, Faust begins "to live the Epicurean life." His table is henceforth of the best, and he receives a supernatural allowance of 1300 crowns per annum [no very princely income]. He then desires to set up a regular household, and is anxious to marry. Announcing his intention to Mephostophiles, the latter flies into a terrible rage. Has he not sworn never to enter the holy bond? On Faust's persistence, however, the Devil passes from words to deeds; he raises a storm which almost shakes the house to its foundation, and threatens to tear the infatuated man limb from limb.

The desire to attain universal knowledge next engrosses our hero. He inquires about Hell and the fallen angels, the creation of the world, and the origin of man, on which points the Devil, it is said, gives him an intentionally false answer (a point on which it is satisfactory to find ourselves at one with the biographer), for Mephisto informs Faust that our globe

is without beginning and end, and that the human race has existed through all time.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the first third of his allotted period Faust is still in his student's house in Wittenberg, occupied with meteorological inquiries, with the construction of a calendar, and discoursing with his familiar on matters for the most part pertaining to the physical world. Then one day Faust's "prince and proper master," Belial, pays him a visit. It was summer, yet the air became so cold that Faust thought he would freeze. He has come to comply with Faust's unspoken wish that he might see all the princes of the infernal world. This wish is now gratified, and one after another the fiends file before him, not in proper

<sup>1</sup> Hermann Grimm ("Preussische Jahrbücher," Bd. 47, 1881, pp. 449-454) has recently pointed out a certain striking resemblance between this book and the "Confessions" of St. Augustine, and even goes so far as to suggest that the "Volksbuch" owed its origin to the work of the Christian Father. Augustine was also a born "speculator," was fascinated by the doctrines of the Manichaeans, but finally subordinated his reason to faith, and thus "saved his soul alive." Faust, too, renounces his early creed, trusts to his own intellectual strength, and gives ear to the seductions of a Manichaean creed, falling hopelessly, however, into the power of the Evil One. The Manichaeans were averse to marriage, and favoured the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of matter and the non-origination and imperishability of the world. It is at least curious that the Manichaean bishop whose acquaintance was eagerly desired by Augustine as a young man was named *Faustus* ("Confessions," v. Vide Grimm, "Preuss. Jahr.," p. 452).

form, however, but in the likeness of various beasts. I must refer you to the book itself for further details of this rare revelation of the Unseen. Whilst occupied with these many-sided investigations Faust is from time to time troubled about his own future destiny. He thinks he would like to have a previous look at the place to which he is bound ; which whim being reported to his lord Belial or Lucifer, Beelzebub appears before him at the dead of night, and carries him to the place in question. "The full report," says the author, "of what he saw Doctor Faust has himself written down, and it has been found after his death." Another account, in the shape of a letter to John Victor, physician at Leipzig, describes a trip to the stars.<sup>1</sup> Faust has seen all that mortal man could see in the heavens above and in the hell beneath. His terrestrial adventures have now to be described. He goes to Rome ; thence to Constantinople, where he presents himself to the Sultan as the Prophet Mahomet dressed in the papal robes.

Now "follows the third and last part of the adventures of D. Faust, what he did and worked with his

<sup>1</sup> Johann Kepler was a Suabian. Are some of the features of our mythical Faust borrowed from this remarkable explorer ? Another "speculator" of the time was Johann Valentin Andrea. See a suggestive article of Erich Schmid's, "Zur Vorgeschichte des Goetheschen Faust," in the "Goethe Jahrbuch," vol. iv., 1883.



Nigromantia at the courts of potentates," and many other less edifying stories.

Two-thirds of his allotted time having elapsed, a friendly pious physician tries to convert him,<sup>1</sup> when Mephistophiles appears upon the scene and requires a renewal of the compact, which Faust is compelled to concede. In the twenty-third year he fills up the measure of his iniquities by demanding and obtaining possession of the beautiful Helen, whose phantom he had conjured up on Low Sunday. In the twenty-fourth year of his compact she bears him a son, which rejoices Faust's heart. He calls him Justus Faustus.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the parallel in Augustine's "Confessions," iv., 3 (Hermann Grimm, "Preuss. Jahr.," Bd. 47, p. 451). The incident, however, was probably directly borrowed from Lercheimer's "Christliche Bedenken" of 1585. (See Zarncke in "Allgemeine Zeitung," Sept. 4, 1883.)

<sup>2</sup> The original of the *erotic* Faust is found by Hermann Grimm in Faustus Andrelinus, whose memory has chiefly been preserved by Erasmus. It is to be gathered from Erasmus's letters that this Faust was, if of no great parts ["his literary remains are either worthless elegies or arid scholarship."—Grimm], endowed with considerable social talents, and altogether a most agreeable companion.

According to Grimm, then, the Johann Faust of the book has three historical originals—Bishop Faustus (Augustine's contemporary), Dr. Georg Faust (Sabellicus), and Faustus Andrelinus (docent at Paris, Italian by birth).

The Helena story, however, is probably to be traced to the Simon Magus legend, which was certainly present to the mind of the compiler of the first "Volksbuch" (p. 98 of reprint of the

The last days are at hand. Certain of his prey, the merciless fiend appears upon the scene, and takes a mean advantage of him by indulging in all sorts of jibes and sneers. Faust finds out, when too late, as the sprite himself says, "it does not pay to eat cherries with the Devil." The evening of his last day he spends with his University friends at a village called Rimlich, and makes a penitential oration, after which the friends retire weeping to their rooms, but cannot sleep. Between twelve and one o'clock the house is terribly shaken, shrieks and horrible noises are heard, and in the morning the mangled remains of the wicked Doctor are found strewn about the room, the horrible scene being only too realistically described. The

first edition, published at Halle, 1878). According to Irenaeus ("Against Heresies," i., 23), Simon of Samaria united himself with a woman named Helena, whom he affirmed to be identical with the Helena who had been the occasion of the Trojan war, and whose soul had been from that time perpetually re-incarnated. The same fable (abbreviated) is also to be found in the "Clementine Homilies" (ii., 25), and, by what must be something more than a coincidence, the name of Faust likewise, the father of the pseudo-Clement being so named ("Homilies," xiv., cc. 8, 10; see also the "Recognitions"), a man who on account of domestic misfortune devotes himself to astrology, and comes to deny God and a divine Providence. These associations can hardly be accidental, and Zahn ("Cyprian von Antiochien," 1882) is doubtless right in remarking that they dispose of the fashionable view that the Helena incident is a creation of the Age of the Renaissance.

students repairing to the house inform the *famulus* to whom Faust has bequeathed his property. Helen and the boy have already disappeared. "Thus endeth the whole true history and enchantment of Doctor Faust, wherefrom all Christians, but particularly those of an arrogant, proud, inquisitive, and scornful mind and brain, may learn to fear God, to flee enchantments, conjurations, and all other devil's work. . . . Amen, Amen."

This singular book was speedily translated into most European languages. In our own country the materials were worked up into a popular ballad, and then into a stage-play by the Elizabethan dramatist, Christopher Marlowe.<sup>1</sup> The Frankfurt story-book appeared in an augmented form in 1590 and 1592.<sup>2</sup> The appetite for the subject increasing, a sequel to the original story appeared in 1594, containing the adventures of the disciple Wagner. And in 1599 there appeared a work in quarto, divided into three distinct parts, purporting to be more complete than all its predecessors, composed by G. R. Widmann, of Hamburg. It is affirmed to be derived from original documents and the testimonies of Faust's personal

<sup>1</sup> The ballad appeared the following year (1588). The oldest edition of the tragedy bears the date 1604, but it had been performed in 1594. (Collier's "History of Dramatic Poetry," vol. ii., p. 184.)

<sup>2</sup> On these and other editions of the Spies' "Volksbuch," see preface to reprint by Fr. Zarncke.

friends, along with the report of Johann Wagner, Faust's servant and legatee. Notwithstanding this parade of authorities, the real nature of this version is far too obvious. Widmann's diffuse moralizing and pious reflections make the reading of the book sufficiently wearisome. The author both adds and omits to suit his dogmatic purpose. Thus he entirely omits the heathen alliance of Faust and Helena. A physician, Doctor Pfitzer, worked over this version of Widmann's in 1674, with omissions and insertions from the earlier legendary books.

With regard to every legend that has attained vast proportions there are three things to be distinguished: first, what is the historical fact at the bottom of it all; secondly, what are the accretions more or less unconscious which it has received in passing from mouth to mouth; thirdly, what deliberate transformations has it undergone at the hands of those who have some special interest to serve or a valued thought to embellish. It is the fusion of these three which usually renders the critical treatment of legends so difficult and unsatisfactory. In the present case the artistic embellishments are easily to be distinguished. The poets who have dealt with the Faust legend do not pretend to be other than poets. As much cannot be said for the theological moralists who wrote the first books. Widmann of Hamburg shows his hand far too plainly for us to attach much

value to the assertion that his narrative was carefully compiled from first-hand sources. But how about the original literary production, the Frankfurt story-book of 1587 itself? The book professes to be an authentic record, its style is exceedingly naïve, and it does not look like an arbitrary selection of materials. It gives the impression of being the work of some scholar devoted to the principles of the Reformation, who had made it his business to obtain information from various quarters concerning the man whose name was so frequently in the popular mouth as that of an arch-enchanter.<sup>1</sup> At the same time he was unmistakably biassed in his treatment by two influences, strong antipathy to the Romish Church, and a belief that all secular knowledge and ways of life unsanctioned by divines were temptations of the Evil One, yielding to which was sure to procure for a man

<sup>1</sup> An attempt to discover the author has hitherto proved fruitless. Something is known of the publisher Spies from the catalogues of his publications, but Zarncke, who has taken much pains to obtain a clue to the author, has been merely able to indicate the "mental atmosphere" in which the author lived. (See an interesting article on Johann Spies, in the "*Allgemeine Zeitung*" for the 4th of September, 1883.) Zarncke brings out the fact that the publisher Spies was a man of mark in his trade, a rigid Lutheran, and publisher by preference of theological books. He seems to have soon tired of the "*History of Faust*," perhaps, as Zarncke suggests, from fear of sharing the fate of the publisher of a rhymed version of the story, who was thrown into prison by the authorities at Tübingen.

eternal condemnation.<sup>1</sup> We can in a measure then, I think, detect in this legendary book the three elements of fact, popular credulity, and deliberate perversion. Examining the matter in all its bearings, it seems to me that the real story was something like this :—

The Roman Church had dominated the Western World for a millennium, successfully keeping the keys of the kingdom of truth and beauty and sternly crushing all independent attempts to enter therein save by its well-protected portals, when the moral revolt of a portion of Germany, and the broadening of the general intelligence with the discovery of new continents and the disinterment of long-buried wisdom, gave an impulse to human progress the like of which had not been known since the day when the spiritual currents of Europe, Asia, and Africa converged to form the potent stream of primitive Christianity. Enterprising navigators told of customs entirely strange to the Western mind, and the productions of warmer lands excited physical cravings previously unfelt. The recovered works of the ancients, the creations of Greek art-genius and the profound reasonings of the old philosophers, awoke dormant aesthetic sensibilities and

<sup>1</sup> The antipathy to Rome is sufficiently evident in his clothing Mephistopheles in the garb of a monk, and making Faust appear before the Sultan as Mahomet (*i.e.*, the false prophet) in the papal robes.

led men to ponder anew on the mysteries of existence; and not least the new method of physical experiment seemed to open up a way to a fresh insight into the secrets of the universe. Two sections of the community alone remained unmoved—the mass of the orthodox clergy and the uncultured multitude. To the alarmed ecclesiastical imagination it seemed as if all the devils of hell had been let loose to trouble the repose of the saints; the multitude gaped wide-mouthed at every application of physical or chemical knowledge the rationale of which it had no previous training to enable it to comprehend, and each story of novel powers grew to extravagant proportions as it passed from one credulous reporter to another. It was not strange that the extremes should meet in that part of Europe which had been least drilled into submission to the sway of Rome, and where a vivid fancy and a high curiosity existed in the midst of a mass of coarse feeling and ignorance. Though England had made spasmodic endeavours after religious liberty, and Italy was the first to welcome the restored Pagan literature, it was Germany, or German Switzerland, that produced a Luther, a Reuchlin, and a Paracelsus.

Faust was a man who had scented the air of a broader world than that in which men had hitherto lived. As an unreflecting and obedient youth he had accepted the family choice (a choice due, no doubt, to signs of the possession of exceptional gifts) to study

theology and become an ornament of the Church. But having plucked all the fruit to be found in the neatly-trimmed but somewhat tame ecclesiastical Eden, he felt still unfilled, and, urged by an irresistible impulse, strayed into the seductive garden of the many-coloured world. He was captivated by the fair blossoms of the trees of natural science. In astronomy, physics, chemistry, he beheld wonderful growths not described in his sacred books. Passing from admiration to sedulous culture, he probably exaggerated man's power, and believed the mastery of Nature more readily attainable than it really is. It is by no means improbable, too, that he made use of the knowledge he acquired to astonish those of his countrymen on whom the idea of any further acquaintance with Nature other than by direct communication from the unseen world had not dawned. The making wine without grapes, one of his famous achievements, as Kuno Fischer humorously remarks, would not so much astonish a nineteenth-century public. It is not unlikely that some of his necromantic feats may have been simply applications of optical laws, and the dreadful end of the enchanter would answer very well to the effect of a chemical explosion. In the sudden introduction of summer fruits in winter, as at the Court of Anhalt, we have perhaps a mythical rendering of certain tropical importations which were at that time known only to a select few. In the marriage of



Faust and Helena we should doubtless see a concrete expression of the welcome given by receptive souls to the fairest antique beauty, when the recovered glories of Greek Art first dazzled Northern eyes. I do not attempt to decide the question, rarely mooted, but to my mind by no means unimportant, whether Faust was the possessor of any supposed occult powers, which (Rationalist as I am) I still do not think disproved by either their rarity or the grotesque form they assume in indirect report—I mean a subtle influence, whether physical or mental, whereby certain natures throw a glamour over men's eyes and persuade them to see what they see not, or that enables their possessor to be cognizant of things and events which the duller senses of the majority cannot discern.

The boundless desire for a wider field of view was the first great element in Faust's character. But a mind which has once seen the insufficiency of ancient beliefs, and is possessed with the passion for attaining real truth, will not stop there. In the sphere of emotion and action such a nature will crave more elbow-room, and Aristotle and the Fathers being laid on the shelves, the social Prometheus will defy the ecclesiastical canons and condemn the restraints and limitations which are intimately bound up with the theoretic creeds. There are unmistakable signs in the legend that Faust's second category of offences

involved a recoil from asceticism, that he chose to enjoy the good things of life, and did not see any special value in fasting and hair-shirts. In an older story-book still we are told that "the Son of Man came eating and drinking," and men called him a wine-bibber and said he had a devil. In fact, without much risk of error, I think we may say in broad terms that Faust was the exponent of a spirit of freedom which at times breaks away from an old order of things, which refuses to have its view bounded by the horizon to which men have grown so accustomed that they deem it immovable, and which craves the amplest experience attainable by human effort. The few who feel thus impelled at all costs to grasp the greatest good within their reach, to break the way for future generations, are exposed to moral dangers from which the less adventurous are free; but these champions in man's behalf will henceforth, we may confidently hope, not be oppressed by the unforgiving spirit of the old legend, but be sustained even in their falls by the cheering words of the world-poet's later and better version—

Whoe'er aspires unweariedly,  
Is not beyond redeeming.

[*Per contra*, see Erich Schmid's judgment ("Goethe-Jahrbuch," Bd. iii., 1882, p. 99): "So viel ist sicher: Faust war ein halbgebildeter kecker Vagrant und

Schwindler, der gelegentlich selbst einsichtige Männer berückte, aber hauptsächlich mit dreister Prahlerei auf die Leichtgläubigkeit der unschwer zu blendenden Menge speculirte.”]

## II.

### THE LEGEND DRAMATIZED.—“FAUST,” A •TRAGEDY, BY JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE.—THE PROLOGUES.

THE subject was just the one to fascinate highly imaginative minds, and all the fine arts have richly embellished it. Rembrandt painted a fancy head of Faust, and there are extant two copies of an etching by the same famous artist representing Faust in his laboratory or study.<sup>1</sup> The musical treatments of the theme are all of recent date, illustrative chiefly of the legend in its latest transformations. But for the true perpetuation of the old legend we must go to the Poets.

There exist only two great poetic elaborations of the story of Faust: “The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus,” by Marlowe, published in 1604, and “Faust,

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 61, 62.

a Tragedy, in Two Parts," by Goethe, published 1832.

The hero of Marlowe's tragedy is ushered in by a chorus, who announce concerning him :—

Now is he born, his parents base of stock,  
In Germany, within a town call'd Rhodes :  
Of riper years, to Wertenberg he went,  
Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him up.  
So soon he profits in divinity,  
The fruitful plot of scholarism graſ'd,  
That shortly he was grac'd with doctor's name,  
Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes  
In heavenly matters of theology ;  
Till swoln with cunning of a self-conceit,  
His waxen wings did mount above his reach,  
And, melting, heavens conspir'd his overthrow ;  
For, falling to a devilish exercise,  
And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,  
He surfeits upon cursèd necromancy ;  
Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,  
Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss.

Faust is then disclosed seated in his study. He reviews the great branches of mediæval learning,—Logic he is master of already, Physic might be worth something if he could raise the dead to life again, Law "fits a mercenary drudge," and Divinity can only declare, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." As sin we must, why not make the utmost of the opportunities of life? The books of magic promise vast power and delight. Faust

then makes a compact with Lucifer, through his servant Mephistophilis :—

Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer :  
Say, he (Faustus) surrenders up to him his soul,  
So he will spare him four-and-twenty years,  
Letting him live in all voluptuousness ;  
Having thee ever to attend on me,  
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,  
To tell me whatsoever I demand,  
To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends.

The bargain is struck, Faustus signing away his soul by a deed written in his own blood. Thereafter Faustus plays mad pranks enough. He goes to Rome ; rendered invisible, takes all kinds of liberties with the Pope ; passing thence to the Court of the Emperor of Germany, he conjures up the shades of Alexander the Great and his “beauteous paramour,” and perpetrates a number of practical jokes on horse-dealers and such like people ; finally, exhibits to his scholars Helen of Troy, whose beauty, however, so fascinates himself that he desires her for wife, which request is instantly granted. His end drawing nigh, he shuts himself up in his chamber, bidding his students not be alarmed if they hear unusual noises in the night. The clock strikes eleven, twelve, and as the moments glide Faustus prays for just a few more moments, that even if he must be damned, his torment may last only a thousand—a hundred thou-

sand—years. In vain. At twelve o'clock thunder and lightning and devils appear and carry off the doomed man.

*Chorus.*

Cut is the brand that might have grown full straight,  
And burnèd is Apollo's laurel-bough,  
That sometime grew within this learnèd man.  
Faustus is gone: regard his hellish fall,  
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise,  
Only to wonder at unlawful things,  
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits  
To practise more than heavenly power permits.

Marlowe is indebted for his main incidents to the Frankfurt book of which I have given an abstract, and he has certainly reproduced its spirit. He has only given an artistic expression to the horror which at the end of the sixteenth century the name of Faust excited far and wide. It does not appear that Marlowe's play was ever popular upon the English stage. It was, however, carried over to Germany by a troop of strolling English players, whose performances would seem to have been highly successful. A German "people's play" was gradually fashioned, modelled on the English tragedy. This people's play was never printed, and underwent several modifications according to the ideas of theatrical effect of the respective stage-managers. In the second half of the seventeenth century it seems to have been

extremely popular. The "Volksschauspiel" maintained its position on the stage far into the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Thenceforward "Doctor Faustus" was only to be witnessed as a puppet or marionette play, although it had already been reduced to that state in 1746.

The versions of the puppet-play (for there were several) were, like the varieties of the People's play, modelled on Marlowe, but contained new elements and motives.<sup>2</sup> The curtain rises on the Doctor seated in his study. "I must," says Faust, "unite myself with Hell, in order to fathom the hidden depths of Nature, and that I may invoke the spirits I will apply myself to Magic." Two voices are then heard, one good, in treble, from Theology on the right, the other evil, in deep bass, on the left. The *Famulus* announces the arrival of three students with a book, "*Clavis Astarti de Magica*." Act II. The students have disappeared, leaving Faust in possession of the book. Faust invokes the fiends. Ape-like forms appear, the last of whom, Mephistopheles, is selected. A bargain is driven for twenty-four years, the year reckoned at 365 days. Mephistopheles carries Faust on his magic cloak to the Court of the Duke of Parma,

<sup>1</sup> The last certain representation took place in 1770, at Hamburg. See Creizenach, "*Versuch einer Geschichte des Volksschauspiels von Doctor Faust*," 1878.

<sup>2</sup> I select Simrock's version for special notice. ("*Faust. Das Volksbuch und das Puppenspiel*." Frankfurt-a.-M., 1877.)



where Faust conjures up heroes and heroines of Jewish history, viz., Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Samson and Delilah, Holofernes and Judith, Goliath and David. Twelve years pass, and Faust is on the point of repenting, when Mephistopheles shows him Helen of Troy. Faust is undone. "That is the divinest of women, give her to me!" he exclaims. The wish is complied with, but Helen changes into a snake in his arms. Faust's time is up. How? The Devil has been even cleverer than his victim had imagined. The bargain was for twenty-four years, each year of 365 days, but a *day* is only twelve hours, and Mephistopheles has served him both *day and night*—"a wretched lawyer's quibble!" his victim remarks, but nevertheless held good in the other-world courts. The end approaches. At nine o'clock a voice calls, "Faust, Faust, prepare for death;" at ten, "Thou art accused." FAUST. "*Quid sum miser tunc dicturas, quem patronum rogaturus?*" Once more a voice is heard, "Thou art being judged." Enter Mephistopheles: it strikes twelve. The voice proclaims the result of the invisible trial—"Faust, Faust, thou art eternally damned!" In his autobiography Goethe says, "The old puppet-play echoed many-toned in my memory."

Of the two contrasted elements of the original story—the Titanic self-assertion of the hero, with its tragic sequel, and the rather broad comedy in which

Faust or his satellite were the chief actors—repeated theatrical manipulation unquestionably favoured the latter at the expense of the former. Certain flashes of genius must undoubtedly be admitted in the Teutonic stage adaptations, but, taken as a whole, Marlowe's work, crude as it is, could alone be pronounced a great achievement at the middle of the eighteenth century. But there now appears a man whose peculiar qualities of mind seem to mark him out for dramatic elaborator of such a theme, who did in fact sketch the plan of a new and profounder Faust-drama—the literary reformer of modern Germany, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Lessing only left behind him the plan of the early scenes and a fragment of the third scene of the second act. This fragment is so remarkable that I cannot forbear quoting it from the translation of Mr. Sime.<sup>1</sup> Faust desires to be attended by the one

<sup>1</sup> "Lessing," 1877, vol. i., p. 200. The original is to be found in the "Briefe die neueste Literatur betreffend," 17te Brief, 16th Feb., 1759. Lessing probably was inspired to write on this theme by witnessing one of the dramatized versions of the Volksdrama at Leipzig or Berlin. It is certain that he had no knowledge of Marlowe. If we are to trust the statement of Karl G. Lessing in his preface to the second part of his brother's dramatic remains, the piece was either wholly or to a considerable extent actually composed. "One of his friends has assured me, that he himself read through here, in Breslau, twelve MS. sheets of the Tragedy" (p. xxxix). "The chest [containing the MS.], directed to the care of the bookseller Gebler of Brunswick, who happened to be

of seven spirits who is the swiftest. Four spirits are quickly dismissed on account of their sluggishness. Then to the fifth—

*Faust.* And how swift art thou?

*Fifth Spirit.* As swift as the thoughts of men.<sup>1</sup>

*Faust.* That is something! But not always are men's thoughts swift. Not when truth and virtue demand them. How heavy are they then! Thou canst be swift if thou wilt; but who can assure me that thou always wilt be so? No, I should trust thee as little as I should be able to trust myself. Ah!—(*To the Sixth Spirit.*) Tell me, how swift art thou?

*Sixth Spirit.* As swift as the vengeance of the avenger.

*Faust.* The avenger! What avenger?

*Sixth Spirit.* The Mighty, the Terrible, who reserved vengeance for himself, because vengeance pleased him.

*Faust.* Devil! thou blasphemest, for I see thou tremblest. Swift, thou sayest, as the vengeance of the—— I had almost named him! No, he shall not be named among us! Swift as vengeance? Swift? And I still live? And I still sin?

*Sixth Spirit.* That he still lets you sin is vengeance!

*Faust.* And that a devil must teach me this!—but to-day, for the first time! No, his vengeance is not swift, and if thou art not more swift than his vengeance, go!—(*To the Seventh Spirit.*) How swift art thou?

*Seventh Spirit.* Insatiable mortal, if even I am not swift enough for thee——

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at the time at the Leipzig fair, was lost. It was intended that he should take it with him to Brunswick, and keep it there till the return of my brother from Italy" (p. xli). Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's "Theatralischer Nachlass," Zweiter Theil., 1786.

<sup>1</sup> Answer of the Fifth Spirit in the Leipzig Puppet-play, Mephistophiles appearing as a huntsman.

*Faust.* Then say, how swift?

*Seventh Spirit.* Not more and not less than the transition from Good to Evil.

\* *Faust.* Ha! Thou art my devil! As swift as the passage from Good to Evil! Yes, that is swift; swifter than that there is nothing!—Away from here, ye snails of Orcus! Away!—As the transition from Good to Evil! I have experienced how swift it is! I have experienced it!

According to the report of a friend of Lessing,<sup>1</sup> the devils were to lay their plot for the ruin of Faust's soul at a nocturnal meeting in a decayed Gothic cathedral. Mephistopheles was to be entrusted with the task of robbing God of a youth, a solitary youth, devoted to truth, abjuring all delights in its pursuit. The love of truth itself should be Faust's ruin. A voice from heaven would then be heard—"Ye shall not conquer."

The train is now laid,—the legend of the story-book and Marlowe's tragic drama, with Faust's eternal damnation, its echo in the Volksschauspiel and puppet-play, the ray of hope suggested by Lessing,—there only needed a powerful genius to complete the work, to transform the vulgar legend into a story for all time, and make Faust an epic of humanity for the nineteenth and still later centuries.

The long elaboration of the material which I have

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Engel, "An den Herausgeber des Theatralischen Nachlasses," published in Lessing's collected works.

hurriedly sketched was insufficient for the construction of the new poem. In possession of the wealth of centuries, the greatest poet of recent times had a task before him which it took a whole life, and that not a short one, to accomplish. The "Faust" of Goethe is a striking refutation of the belief that the productions of high poetic power are the immediate result of some swift mysterious agency, that the darling of the Muses has only to take pen in hand, and lo! there is a great work of art ready for the admiration of the world. That may be true of the effusions which usually are the first product of the poetic faculty. Goethe could pour forth love-lyrics fast enough, and impetuously reproduce on paper the stream of emotion which swept through his soul during a ride through a driving storm, or on passing some time-worn castle,—but a world-theme like that of "Faust"—sixty years are not too many to match word to thought, and collect thought from vivid life and silent depth of soul.

Goethe had just finished his student-course, had been dubbed "Magister et Doctor," when, in Strassburg, 1772 (age twenty-three), the idea of writing a considerable poem on the story of "Faust" took powerful hold of him. The old story-book and puppet-play had strongly affected his imagination in boyhood, and certain circumstances of his own life were giving him the power to realize more vividly

than most other men that remarkable story. He had no particular leaning to any of the branches of learning. He had heard lectures on many subjects at the University of Leipzig, and found them all alike insufferably dull. Formal and cold the professors seemed to be, only turning out phrases. Insight into nature and life they appeared not in the least to possess, and when, later on, Goethe became Philosophical Doctor, he seemed to be a mockery to himself. Returning from Leipzig to his native Frankfurt, he became intimate with a pious lady, Fräulein von Klettenberg, whose mind dwelt in the twilight-world of Mysticism, a mysticism bordering on Magic. Goethe easily glided from one to the other, and for months he shut himself up in his garret, poring over the books of alchemists, and trying to discover the Philosopher's Stone and fabricate the Elixir Vitæ by help of clumsy retorts and crucibles. Thence to Strasburg, whose splendid cathedral drew him like some spirit of Destiny, and where there awaited him the living genius who at once kindled and disciplined his superb imagination, Gottfried Herder. Here then we may affirm that our "Faust" was born. Thenceforth every grand epoch of Goethe's life was to contribute something to this artistic projection of his experience, every deeper word, every prominent action was to be transfigured by fancy, and fixed in wonderful language for the delight and meditation of after-times.

Not, however, till the year 1790 was the world to be favoured with any part of the results of these musings and experiences. He then published a fragment of what is now the First Part. The contents of this fragment were—

- (1.) Faust's first soliloquy. Apparition of the Earth-Spirit. Conversation with Wagner.
- (2.) From the middle of what is now the second interview with Mephistopheles in the Study, onward to the end of the scene in the Witch's Kitchen.
- (3.) The Story of Gretchen, omitting the death of Valentine, and terminating with the scene in the Cathedral.

Four years pass by, and nothing more of the work is forthcoming. In the meantime that other great poetic luminary of the period has been gladdening the hearts of susceptible men and women, and Schiller's call to Jena and Goethe's settlement at Weimar have brought the two greatest poets of the time into the closest contact. In a letter from Schiller, dated November 29, 1794, we find the following occurring almost casually:—"No less great is my desire to read those parts of your 'Faust' which are as yet unpublished; for I can honestly say what I have read of it is to me like the torso of a Hercules. There reigns in those scenes the power and the fulness of genius, which unmistakably reveals the first master,

and I should like as far as possible to follow the great and bold spirit that breathes in them."

Goethe answers three days later:—"Of 'Faust' I cannot as yet let you have anything. I cannot make up my mind to untie the packet in which it is imprisoned. I could not copy without working it out, and I have no courage for that."

Three years later (1797) we find Goethe writing—"I have determined to take up my 'Faust' and, if not to finish it, at all events to bring it a good deal further, by breaking up what has been printed and arranging it in large masses with what is already finished or invented, and of thus further preparing the development of the play, which is in reality as yet only an idea. I have merely taken up this idea and its representation again, and have pretty well made up my mind about it. I only wish, however, that you would be so good as to think the matter over on one of your sleepless nights, and to tell me the demands which you would require of the whole, and in this manner to narrate and to interpret to me my own dreams, like a true prophet."

On the very next day Schiller writes a letter which, in the history of our subject, may be called *classical*:—"The request you make that I should tell you of my requirements and *desideria* is not so easily fulfilled; but as far as I can I will try to discover your thread, and if that cannot be managed, will do as if I



had accidentally found the fragments of 'Faust,' and had myself to work them out. This much only I will here remark, that 'Faust'—the piece, I mean—in spite of all its individuality, cannot quite ward off the demand for a symbolical treatment, as probably is the case with your own idea. The duality of human nature and the unsuccessful endeavour to unite in man the godlike and the physical, is never lost sight of; and as the story runs, and must run, into what is fantastic and formless, people will not consent to remain by the subject, but will be led from it to ideas. In short, the demands on 'Faust' are both philosophical and poetical, and you may turn in whichever direction you please, the nature of the subject will force you to treat it philosophically, and the imagination will have to accommodate itself to serve a rational idea. But I can scarcely be telling you anything new by saying this, for you have already, in a great measure, begun to satisfy this demand in what you have already accomplished." Goethe immediately answers, "Thank you for your first words on my reawakening 'Faust.' We shall probably not differ in our views of this work, and yet quite a different kind of courage comes over one when one sees one's thoughts and projects characterized by another; and your sympathy is fruitful in more than one sense."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This and the foregoing extracts from the correspondence

Schiller died in 1805, and in 1808 (Goethe then being fifty-nine) the first part of "Faust" as we now have it was presented to the world.

Nineteen years rolled by ; and then a fragment of the second part was published, namely, the third act, entitled "Helena." A year later a second fragment went to press, the commencement of the second part and a large portion of Act I.

On the 20th of July, 1831, the last line is written ; and on the 28th of August of the same year (his eighty-second birthday) Goethe seals up the manuscript of the whole second part. Not a line shall be added, and nothing more shall see the light until the eyes of the composer himself are closed. Goethe died the 22nd of March, 1832. Shortly after, the Second Part is published—the whole poem as we now possess it.

Very slowly, therefore, the great work was wrought out ; but, if we except the precise nature of Mephistopheles, there is sufficient evidence to show that, slowly as the work advanced, the central idea of the whole was in Goethe's mind from the first. It has been the fashion (especially in England) to look upon the first part as "the Tragedy of Faust" proper, and to consider the part a whole in itself. Nothing could

between Schiller and Goethe are quoted from the translation of Miss L. Dora Schmitz, 1877.

be more mistaken. The First Part is essentially incomplete. How could Goethe, with his model of the "Tragical History of Faust" before him, possibly have ended with the First part? Faust in the First part is neither lost nor saved; and had Goethe paused there he might have been a playwright such as the theatrical manager of the Prelude desiderated, but not the poet who seized upon this very theme just because it was something more than a mere story of earthly weal and woe.

The "what" we may say was always before his mind—it was the "how" that made the task so difficult.

Says Schiller, in 1797 (that is, when only the fragment of Part I. had been actually published), "your 'Faust' I have now again read through, and I feel actually giddy. What I am anxious about in regard to it is that, in accordance with his character, 'Faust' appears to require a totality of material, if at the end the idea is completely carried out; and I know of no poetic framework for holding a mass that springs up to such a height. *I am, in fact, very anxious to see how the popular part of the tale will link itself to the philosophical portion of the whole.*"

Says Hermann Grimm (and it shall stand for my final judgment), "for the understanding of 'Faust' we must, before all, maintain that it forms a *whole*. First and second part, prologue, prelude,—in short,

everything that at the present day is printed together, must be treated as a unity.”<sup>1</sup>

From this point of view I shall regard Goethe’s “Faust” in these lectures. In the time at my command I shall endeavour to connect the seemingly disjointed scenes, and carry you by natural stages from the prologue in Heaven to the mystic epilogue of the second part.

From Heaven begins the human lot,  
To Heaven revolves eternally,

sings some poet; and Goethe’s poem ends where it begins. The story comes full circle. The earth-progress is but movement within a sphere whose circumference is infinite; in other words, the theme is universal and eternal. The world has not yet outgrown the potent attraction exerted by great artworks wherein the natural and supernatural are felicitously blended, and that which contains the secret of the fascinating power of a “Macbeth” and a “Hamlet” after the lapse of two centuries compels an interest in the “Faust” of Goethe, an interest which may not fade till all mystery has faded out of human life.

The idea of writing a work on the subject of “Faust” seems first to have occurred to Goethe when he was

<sup>1</sup> “Goethe. Vorlesungen gehalten an der Kgl. Universität zu Berlin von Hermann Grimm.” Zweite Aufl. 1880. P. 464.

in his twentieth year, *i.e.* in 1769, and the oldest part of the extant poem was meditated and written between that date and 1775. In the year 1790, as I have already mentioned, a fragment of the first part was published, in number of lines about half of what we now know as Part I. The poem was then laid aside and not resumed till 1797, about the time when Goethe (the 22nd of June) wrote to Schiller, "the ballad-studies have brought me back again to this *dark and misty path*." It was then also that the short poem forming the dedication<sup>1</sup> was almost certainly written, "An Address to Love and Friendship" as it has been called, four stanzas of exquisite beauty, making pathetic reference to the broken circle of friends who welcomed his early efforts and the unforgettable memories of the past. The author was at this time forty-eight years of age. This dedication was first prefixed to the edition of 1808.

The prelude in the theatre which follows is a dialogue between a stage-manager, a poet, and a Merry Andrew. This was also written in 1797, being suggested by the prelude prefixed to the Indian play "Sakontala," which Goethe had read in the German version of Georg Förster, published in 1791, itself a translation of the English rendering of the original by Sir William Jones. In "Sakontala" the introducing

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Clarke (1865) renders "Induction."

dialogue is between the theatrical manager and an actress. In the Indian play the prelude takes the place of a prologue, merely stating the subject of the drama and bespeaking the favour of the audience. Goethe's object in his prelude seems to be to suggest what a reader might not unnaturally expect to find, and what he will not find, in "Faust." The manager desires of the poet a great sensation-drama; he does not care on what theme so long as there be incident enough and scope for unlimited spectacular display. The unity of the whole need not be a matter of particular concern, for, as he very shrewdly remarks to the poet, the public will in any case at once pick the production to pieces, and carry away just those parts which suit individual fancy. Nor need the poet soar particularly high, for people only come to the theatre for an hour's amusement, and will go home, perhaps, to a game of cards or a carouse. The poet speaks in the spirit of the real artist. He cannot produce plays to order, the favour of the Muses is not to be invoked for ends so frivolous and fleeting. The Merry Andrew endeavours to mediate. Let the poet write his play with stirring incidents from real life, and it cannot fail to satisfy at least ingenuous and aspiring youth.

"Then give me back," exclaims the poet—

Youth's golden prime  
When my own spirit too was growing,

\*            \*            \*            \*

The power of hate, the energy of love.  
Give me, oh, give me back my youth again!

But the Merryman reminds him that youth is not essential for the work now required. The words are, doubtless, spoken with significance:—

Youth, good my friend, you certainly require  
When foes in combat sorely press you, &c. . . .  
But that familiar harp with soul  
To play,—with grace and bold expression,  
And towards a self-erected goal  
To walk with many a sweet digression,—  
This, aged Sirs, belongs to you,  
And we no less revere you for that reason:  
Age childish makes, they say, but 'tis not true;  
We're only genuine children still, in age's season.—T.

When the author suggested this oblique apology, he hardly could have dreamt he would be still at the same task thirty years from even this mature period of his career.

The real introduction to "Faust" is the prologue in Heaven, an introduction to the *whole* work, in which the key-note is significantly struck, and the unity of the poem unmistakably certified.

For the original suggestion of this prologue we must go back to the Hebrew book of Job. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence

comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" To which Satan replies, He is faithful because he has been prosperous. "But put forth thine hand now and touch all that he has, and he will curse thee to thy face." And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold all that he has is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

That this passage was in Goethe's mind is obvious, even without the following confirmation, which is especially interesting to an English audience. The late Henry Crabbe Robinson in his diary, recording an interview with Goethe, writes: "On my mentioning that Lord Leveson Gower had not ventured to translate the prologue in Heaven, he seemed surprised. 'How so? that is quite unobjectionable. The idea is in Job?' He did not perceive that that was the aggravation, not the excuse." I may add that another of the earlier translators, Dr. Auster, had also some scruples on the subject, for he leaves the designation of the divine interlocutor in the irreligious German!

It is satisfactory to think that we have outgrown this pseudo-reverence.

In Goethe's work, as in Job, the Lord gives audience



on a certain day to the angels who preside over the physical and moral universe. The three archangels who have control over the solar system step forward each in the order of dignity, beginning with the least (as arranged by the Pseudo-Dionysius, the Areopagite—a great authority of the Middle Ages). Raphael chants the sublime course of the sun, making spherul melody with its companion suns (or planets, according to the ancient astronomy). Gabriel next describes the earth's revolution on its axis, and, lastly, Michael the physical changes on the earth's surface.

## RAPHAEL.

The sun with brother orbs is sounding  
Still, as of old, his rival song,  
As on his destined journey bounding  
With thunder-step he sweeps along.  
The sight gives angels strength though greater  
Than angels' utmost thought sublime,  
And all thy lofty works, Creator,  
Are grand as in creation's prime.

## GABRIEL.

And fleetly, thought transcending, fleetly  
The earth's green pomp is spinning round,  
And paradise alternates sweetly  
With night terrific and profound.  
Then foams the sea, its broad wave beating  
Against the cliff's deep rocky base,  
And rock and sea away are fleeting  
In everlasting spherul chase.

## MICHAEL.

And storms with rival fury heaving  
From land to sea, from sea to land,  
Still as they rave a chain are weaving  
Of linked efficacy grand.  
There burning desolation blazes,  
Precursor of the thunder's way ;  
But, Lord, thy servants own with praises  
The gentle movement of thy day.

## ALL THREE.

The sight gives angels strength though greater  
Than angels' utmost thought sublime,  
And all thy lofty works, Creator,  
Are grand as in creation's prime.<sup>1</sup>

On the conclusion of this hymn of praise Mephistopheles uplifts his voice. His first speech is highly characteristic. In contrast to the splendid phraseology of the angels, his language is vulgar and commonplace. Mephistopheles is from the first anti-sentimentalist, Philistine, and humourist. Goethe's Mephistopheles is poles asunder from Milton's Satan. Nothing is said of his having fallen from a higher estate, or indeed of his origin at all. He is declared by the Lord to be one of the least troublesome of a negating class of immaterial beings, his function being to stimulate man's flagging energies. But let us follow the course of the scene a little more closely.

<sup>1</sup> Translated by F. H. Hedge, D.D., in notes to Miss Swanwick's translation, published in New York, 1882.

Mephistopheles in his opening speech declares that his view is strictly confined to man and his doings, the "little god of the world," who remains, not as wonderful (*wundervoll*) but as grotesque (*wunderlich*) "as on the primal day." His lot would have been better if he had not received a faint gleam of the heavenly light. This ray from a higher world, the Reason [in the transcendental sense of reason, doubtless, as the power of cognizing moral ideals] does not serve to enlighten him, but only to make him constantly attempt to soar to heights which are essentially above his reach. If man's highest faculty had been the analytic understanding, there would not have been this incongruity between his aspiration and his achievement.

THE LORD.

Knowest thou Faust?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with an unmistakable tone of contempt*).

The Doctor?

THE LORD.

My servant.

An odd sort of servant, is the reply, desiring a universal good that is incompatible with his lowly origin, mad, and half-conscious of it too.

THE LORD.

Though now he serves me with imperfect sight,  
I will ere long conduct him to the light.

The gardener knoweth, when the green appears,  
That flowers and fruit will crown the coming years.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What will you bet?—There's still a chance to gain him,  
If unto me full leave you give,  
Gently upon *my* road to train him!

THE LORD.

As long as he on earth doth live  
So long I make no prohibition;  
While man's desires and aspirations stir,  
He cannot choose but err.

Mephistopheles is grateful for the favour; it is the ruddy cheek, nor the corpse, that is attractive to him.

THE LORD.

Enough! What thou hast asked is granted.  
Turn off this spirit from his fountain-head;  
To trap him, let thy snares be planted,  
And him, with thee, be downward led;  
Then stand abashed, when thou art forced to say:  
A good man, through obscurest aspiration,  
Has still an instinct of the one true way.—T.

It is impossible to read this prologue and not to feel how far Goethe was removed from the ecclesiastical sphere of thought. This is not shown in the circumstance that he has ventured to bring the Deity himself on the stage,—that had been already done in the mystery and miracle plays sanctioned by the

Church itself. There is no lack of dignity or sublimity in the celestial court. But the way in which man's destiny is regarded, and the place occupied by the evil principle, is far from being that of Christian tradition. Goethe had a difficult task, indeed, to combine the popular conception of "The Devil" with his own view of evil, and there are not wanting critics who pronounce his attempt unsuccessful; but whether successful or not, it is evident from the prologue what was the nature of his own creed.

Taking Faust as a type of the loftiest kind of man, we see a being possessed of an insatiable craving to grasp the essential truth of the world, and to live the fullest life of feeling. But this striving is rather spasmodic than persistent, and man easily sinks to the lower levels and into content with the most superficial knowledge and the emptiest delights. Accordingly it is necessary to apply a certain goad to his torpid faculties, and this is effected by the spirit of criticism, as we may call it, no maleficent spirit. As the Lord says to Mephistopheles,

I ne'er have cherished hate for such as thee,  
and

This companion purposely I give,  
Who stirs, excites, and must as devil work.

Must as devil work. Mephistopheles is only *seeming* devil, not true malignancy; only apparently man's

evil genius, really his friend. We are here far away from the orthodox Devil; and far away, too, when Mephistopheles himself says he has no special concern with the dead, but only with the living. It is not easy to reconcile this latter statement with the author's own elaboration of his theme, but as far as the exigencies of conformity to the old legend allow, it will be clear as we proceed that the part played by Mephistopheles is really that foreshadowed in the prologue. We must remember likewise that we have here only a prologue, not a lengthy argument. There is no hint of the sin and suffering that are to ensue as Mephistopheles applies himself to his permitted task. Nor are we even told what the end of the venture will be. The serenity of the prologue does not prepare us for the stormy scenes to come hereafter, but the Temptation of Man is an evolution, and it would hardly have been a wise art that had shown the mouth of hell and all its horrors ere the tragedy had begun.

The origin of the name Mephistopheles<sup>1</sup> has been the subject of much learned discussion, and it may be said that its etymology is still obscure. In the legendary book of 1587, wherein the name occurs for the first time, it appears Mephostophiles, which has

<sup>1</sup> Precisely in this form first occurs in Goethe's "Faust." Even the puppet-plays have Mephistophiles.

given rise to at least two specious etymologies—*Me-phos-philos* and *Me-phosto-philos*; *Me* being the Greek negative particle, *phos* light, and *phosto* a Greekized form of *Faustus*. Thus, according to the first etymology, *Mephostophiles* would be *one who does not love the light*; according to the second, *one that does not love Faustus*. As the Devil is not unfrequently termed the Prince of Darkness, the Light-hater would seem a very apt designation, but there is a little hitch which is fatal to the derivation; the word ought then to have been *Mephotophilēs*, and altogether the derivation seems to savour too much of an after-thought. The other interpretation is ingenious, but could only pass muster if it could be shown that the name *Mephostophiles* is coeval with the *Faust*-legend.<sup>1</sup> There have been found some to favour a connection between *Mephisto* and *mephitic*; while Arnold Rudolph has recently sought to trace the word to *Hephaistos*, treating *Mephistophiles* as a corruption of *Hephaistophilos*, laying stress on the natural associations of *Hephaistos*, the Fire-god, and the Lord of the hottest of regions.

Lastly, Sabell ("Zu Goethe's hundertdreissigstem Geburtstag," 1879) analyzes the word into *Mephi* and *Stoffel*, as the comic character *Kasperle* in the

<sup>1</sup> It is favoured by Von Loeper, but curtly dismissed by Sabell.

Puppet-play calls the demon. "The Devil loves to parody what is Christian; thus he calls himself Voland, Faland, in contrast to Heiland [Saviour]; instead of Christoffel (thus was Christophorus written in the sixteenth century) a contrasted name *Mepho* (or *Mephi*) *Stoffel* may be imagined, and the only question would then be: What does Mepho or Mephi signify?" To which Sabell confesses he has no answer to give, save to conjecture that it is Oriental.

Gustav Hauff ("Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literatur," Bd. 66, 1881, p. 301) supports this view, adding that it had previously occurred to himself that the original form of the name was Mephistophel. He also cites a passage from Wuttke's "Deutsche Volksaberglaube," 2 Aufl., § 641, in reference to the exorcism of the Christophorus or Christoffel-prayer. "The Jesus-child then, after he has baptized him, names Christophorus for his treasurer, and gives into his power all the treasures of the earth. In receiving the treasure one must not look round when one hears one's name called; it is the earth-spirits who grudge man the treasure." Hauff then suggests that in opposition to Saint Christoffel the spirit who grudged man treasures obtained the name Mephistoffel. This writer further refers to Widmann, who makes Mephistophiles declare that he is no devil, but a *spiritus familiaris*, who chooses to dwell with men. With regard to the first part of the



word, G. Hauff hesitates between the affinity with the Hebrew *Mephi*, as in Mephibosheth, or Mephitis (muffig, müffig).

Goethe himself did not know the origin of the name.

### III.

#### THE SPELL.

**I** NOW pass to the tragedy itself. I may premise that Goethe received a hint for the opening scene not merely from the play of Marlowe, but also from an etching of Rembrandt, in his own possession, and a reduced engraving of which he caused to be prefixed to the first published fragment of his "Faust."<sup>1</sup> In this picture Faust is represented standing before a desk, dressed in a long robe, and wearing a white cap. He is intently observing a mirror, held by a figure, the lower part of whose body is alone visible, the head being concealed by a rayed disk, on the circumference of which are inscribed the letters I N R I. Within the disk is an interior circle inscribed with cabalistic characters. One hand of the figure is pointing to the mirror. The rayed disk and circle

<sup>1</sup> 1790. Not, however, to any other edition. The copy of the "achte Ausgabe" (published in the same year) in the British Museum does not contain it.

occupy the centre of the window of the chamber. The remaining contents of the room are a globe (half-seen) on the floor to the right, and a chest or book-shelf, somewhat behind Faust, from which "a grinning skull" looks down.<sup>1</sup>

The time is the sixteenth century—the scene a narrow, but lofty, room, with arched roof, in a venerable monastic building. The room is evidently tenanted by a student, and no raw one either, for books and manuscripts dust-covered and worm-eaten rise from floor to ceiling,—in this corner are ranged the materials and instruments of the alchemist, in that animal relics, anatomical preparations,—and a hollow human skull looks down upon the scholar at his work. The man himself, with thought-worn brow and flowing beard, aged fifty, it would seem, is seated at his desk. He has been professor of many sciences for over ten years, but he has been longer still *Magister et Doctor* in more than one faculty. This man has been no ordinary student, or commonplace teacher. For he has not been satisfied with selecting some special department of the vast domain of knowledge, but has wandered from one sphere to another eagerly amassing all the intellectual wealth centuries of in-

<sup>1</sup> The date of the original is probably somewhat before 1650. See "L'œuvre complet de Rembrandt décrit et catalogué par M. Eugène Dutint et reproduit à l'aide des procédés de l'Héliographie par M. Charseyre." Paris, 1881.

vestigation have painfully procured, and he can dispute successfully with the various doctors and clerks in their more limited, but not therefore more profoundly studied, departments. And yet with this load of learning, with a breadth of vision excelling all his contemporaries, with the willing homage of both high and low, Faust is the most miserable of mortals, so miserable that he can say:—

No dog would endure such a cursed existence !

It is very late in the night, and gazing through the open casement he exclaims :—

O full-orb'd moon, did but thy rays  
Their last upon mine anguish gaze !  
Beside this desk, at dead of night,  
Oft have I watched to hail thy light :  
Then, pensive friend ! o'er book and scroll,  
With soothing power, thy radiance stole !  
In thy dear light, ah, might I climb,  
Freely, some mountain-height sublime ;  
Round mountain caves with spirits ride,  
In thy mild haze o'er meadows glide,  
And, purged from knowledge-fumes, renew  
My spirit in thy healing dew !—S.

And then he looks upon his room's interior, and the contrast of the gloom within and the beauty of Nature without excites in him the feeling of hopelessness of a doomed prisoner.

But why this misery ? Well, the reason is plain

enough. The learning of the schools, instead of kindling his spiritual powers, has but aroused the cold critical faculty. What his zealous truth-seeking has done for him has been to make him perceive that all the sermons, creeds, and pompous dogmas are but "idiot gabble" and finely-sounding make-believe. The philosopher's explanation of the world is but an empty word-play, and the divine's elaborate argument for the existence of God and a Hereafter have only left a deeper scepticism than they have professed to sweep away. Call this string of phrases truth and wisdom? It is but the "darkening counsel by words without knowledge." And yet Faust is at the end of his books and the lore of the Fathers. There is no door open to him now by which to emerge into the land of real Being but the Church-forbidden one of consultation of the existences that lurk behind Nature and move its springs, therefore masters of all its secrets.

He takes down from the shelves a book he had hitherto never ventured to peruse. It is a precious volume from the hand of a mighty dabbler in the black arts, one Michel de Nôtre-dame, born the 14th of December, 1503, at St. Remy in Provence, whose book of prophecies is already in the "Index Expurgatorius" of the Sacred College. But what cares Faust now for ecclesiastical censures? He has learnt to despise the whole tribe of priests, for they have not been con-

vincing enough to give him either hope of Heaven or fear of Hell.

- The book is opened, and the sign of the Macrocosm perceived, the symbol of the vast natural order. The Macrocosm has three spheres; the lowest, that of earth and her satellite, the next embracing sun and stars, and above all that of the pure empyrean—lower being related to higher as type to antitype. The pervading forces are summed up respectively in terrestrial fire, solar heat, and seraphic love; while the universal spirits pass from one sphere to another, pouring out their life-giving influence, and binding all the worlds into a wondrous whole.

The macrocosmic sign is a wonderful symbol enough. As the student attentively regards it every rebellious thought is checked and every wild desire is hushed. The brain feels marvellously clear, and he self-upbraidingly quotes the words of some sage :—

Unlocked the spirit-world doth lie ;  
Thy sense is shut, thy heart is dead !  
Up, scholar, lave, with courage high,  
Thine earthly breast in morning-red.—S.

But his composure is very brief. It is a grand spectacle that is spread before his view, too grand indeed for puny mortal. The spectacle of the heavens as disclosed to the uplifted glance on a cloudless winter's night is truly awe-inspiring ; we feel how insignificant we are in this vast ocean of being. But these inter-

minable worlds are too remote ; they strike us dumb and leave us cold, and we bend our gaze towards earth again, and long to rest our eyes upon something that can return glance for glance, something nearer to our beating breasts. Faust turns the leaves impatiently until his attention is arrested by the symbol of the Earth.

How all unlike the influence of this sign !

Earth-Spirit, thou to me art nigher,—

E'en now my strength is rising higher,

E'en now I glow as with new wine ;

Courage I feel, abroad the world to dare,

The woe of earth, the bliss of earth to bear.—S. •

He has touched a chord that is not wholly irresponsible. The lamp begins to burn dimly, a chilling vapour is diffused through the chamber, and he is seized with a strange horror. But Faust has gone too far to retreat now. It is the crisis of his life. Does he hesitate now—for the rest of his earthly course he will be nothing but a scholastic drudge, doling out half-truths to unappreciative youths, and moping in this book-walled prison.

Summoning all his strength for one great effort he grasps the book firmly, and solemnly pronounces the sign of the Spirit. A red flame leaps up in the gloom, and in it appears a terrible gigantic figure, so awe-inspiring that Faust is prostrated at the sight.

*SPIRIT.*

To know me thou didst breathe thy prayer,  
My voice to hear, to gaze upon my brow ;

Me doth thy strong entreaty bow—  
 Lo! I am here!—what pitiful despair  
 Grasps thee, the demigod! Where's now the soul's deep cry?  
 Where is the breast, which in its depths a world conceived,  
 And bore and cherished; which, with ecstasy,  
 To rank itself with us, the spirits, heaved?  
 Where art thou, Faust? whose voice I heard resound,  
 Who toward me pressed with energy profound?  
 Art thou he? Thou,—whom thus my breath can blight,  
 Whose inmost being with affright  
 Trembles, a crushed and blighted worm?

FAUST.

Shall I yield, thing of flame, to thee?  
 Faust, and thine equal, I am he!

SPIRIT.

In the current of life, in action's storm,  
     I float and I wave  
     With billowy motion!  
     Birth and the grave  
     A constant weaving  
     With change still rife,  
     A restless heaving,  
     A glowing life,—  
 'Thus time's whirring loom unceasing I ply,  
 And weave the life-garment of deity.

FAUST.

Thou, restless spirit, dost from end to end  
 O'ersweep the world; how near I feel to thee!

SPIRIT.

Thou'rt like the spirit thou dost comprehend,  
 Not me!—S.



The spirit vanishes, and Faust has not recovered from this wonderful disclosure of the invisible world when a well-known knock is heard at the door, and; arrayed in dressing-gown and night-cap, lamp in hand, lo! the only too familiar spirit, the 'pedant Wagner, shuffles into the room.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding his failure to retain him, Faust has really invoked the Spirit who will aid him. The instinct was quite right which led him to call on the presiding genius of the planet of which he was a denizen. This Spirit alone could give him what his starved nature needed. He was in that condition where pure science could avail nothing, if indeed it could ever serve him. The spectacle of the midnight heavens, the glory of the astronomer, could bring no healing to Faust now, nor could any celestial food prepared within the Church's hallowed precincts still his hunger—what Faust needed was the natural human life. His intellect had been cultured to a high degree, and he had tasted in earlier days of religious joy—it was the clamorous heart which had never obtained its natural aliment that now was goading

<sup>1</sup> The name of the Famulus Wagner is borrowed from the original legend. It was formerly (and to a certain extent still is) customary at certain universities for the professor to be assisted by a student, who usually resided with him and acted as both amanuensis and intermediary between the professor and the rest of the students.

him to despair. But though the Earth-Spirit was the power who could aid him, it also was too vast for any individual mortal; some agency closer still must be found, and hence the scornful words—

Thou'rt like the spirit thou dost comprehend,  
Not me!

Though Faust thinks his invocation has been in vain, it is in fact quite otherwise, as will appear in due time.

Wagner's appearance on the withdrawal of the apparition is a fine stroke of art. Indeed, without this inimitable foil to Faust we should hardly have been able adequately to appreciate our hero's greatness. The Famulus imagines his teacher has been reading aloud a Greek tragedy to improve himself in elocution. Although apparently he had retired to rest, this is a chance not to be lost for gaining a few useful hints.

Pardon! I heard you here declaiming;  
Improvement in this art is now my aim.  
When in his study pent the whole year through,  
Man views the world, as through an optic glass,  
On a chance holiday, and scarcely then,  
How by persuasion can he govern men!—S.

To which Faust indignantly replies—

If feeling prompt not, if it does not flow  
Fresh from the spirit's depths, with strong control  
Swaying to rapture every listener's soul,

Idle your toil; the chase you may forego!  
 For that which issues from the heart alone  
 Will bend the hearts of others to your own.—S.

Wagner mildly suggests—

The speaker in delivery will find  
 Success alone; I still am far behind.

Whereupon Faust bursts out—

Be not a hollow tinkling fool!  
 Sound understanding, judgment true,  
 Find utterance without art or rule;  
 And when with earnestness you speak,  
 Then is it needful cunning words to seek?—S.

(Good advice enough, I have no doubt, for the worthy  
 Famulus, but still a trifle exaggerated.)

“Ah!” sighs the professor’s assistant, “but art is so  
 long and life is so short, and then before one has half  
 annotated the scrolls of the old masters, death abruptly  
 brings the labour to a close.”

“Parchment,” retorts Faust,

Is that the sacred fount whence roll  
 Waters he thirsteth not who once has quaffed?

Oh! but it is delightful to transport oneself into the  
 spirit of the Past!—

To see in times before us how a wise man thought,  
 And what a glorious height *we* have achieved at last.

FAUST.

Ay, truly! even to the loftiest star!

But yet, what people are wont to call the “spirit  
 of the Past” is usually their own poor spirit, after all.

We shall meet with this worthy man again—on the following day, still as *Famulus* or professor's attendant, and years after as world-renowned Professor. He will be building better than he knows when we come across him for the last time, doing a really great work; but still the same kind of man as on Easter-eve. The highest dream of this man is to be installed professional reporter of hieroglyphics, the key within himself to whose interpretation he does not possess, a very useful instrument for preventing the superscriptions on ancient tombstones from becoming illegible, but perplexed by no riddles of destiny and tormented by no yearnings for a deeper life which rack the brain or trouble the heart of his master.

Left again alone, Faust recurs to the astonishing vision which had been vouchsafed him. It has depressed him to a lower depth than he had reached before. He had once imagined himself to be a demigod, and now finds himself spurned like a worm. The spirit-world rejects him. There is then no egress from this bookish dungeon for the term of his natural life! And there on the shelf above him is the grinning skull which seems to say, "I once, like you, tried to pierce behind the veil, but I had to give it up as a profitless waste of time. And what do those books of history that weigh down yonder shelves declare? Only that generation after generation has tor-

mented itself for naught,—this earthly life is vanity of vanities.”

Faust has touched the bottom of the abyss. His eye glistens as it lights upon a phial filled with a swiftly working poison. If the path of Magic be really closed to him, if he cannot, while in the body, constrain the elemental spirits to show him the secrets of existence, he will without more ado “shuffle off this mortal coil,” and then, perforce, “as spirit with spirit speak.” He takes up a goblet round which cluster some dear old memories—a goblet with certain picture-riddles wrought on it, which the guests at his father’s table were invited to guess before being allowed to drink therefrom—the delight of his boyish days. Having poured in the liquid, he raises the cup firmly—

Let this last draught, the product of my skill,  
My own free choice, be quaffed with resolute will,  
A solemn festive greeting to the coming day !

But hardly has the goblet touched his lips when from the neighbouring church rings out a peal of bells, and the melody of human voices impersonating the heavenly choir floats towards him :—

Christ is arisen !  
Joy to the Mortal One,  
Whom the unmerited,  
Clinging, inherited  
Needs did imprison.—T.

It is Easter morning, and the priests are up betimes hymning the glad tidings of the brightest festival of the Christian year. The would-be suicide hesitates, listening to the melodious chimes, when once more the words are borne to him—

Christ is ascended!  
Bliss hath invested Him,  
Woes that molested Him,  
Trials that tested Him,  
Gloriously ended!—T.

The words are well-chosen enough, the message has a cheery sound, but as a message it is worthless to Faust. To the ordinary dwellers of the crowded town, to the pale maiden in her chamber, to the venerable burgher doing his lessening task with quiet hope, these words may bring real comfort—but to Faust, no! The Resurrection is a fable to him, the Church's heaven and hell have passed into the category of the incredible. Prolonged reflection and careful sifting of evidence have done their work too well for doubt on that point. But, though the message be sufficiently empty of meaning, the music is very sweet, and he is carried swiftly back in fancy to days long past, when in childhood he heard those chants, when "prayer was bliss." Prayer was bliss! That time is far behind him indeed. When he prays now it is to the Earth-Spirit, not the Lord of All, not to the apotheosized Christ at the right hand of the King of

Heaven, but to the genius who presides over the streams of daily weal and woe. But, for all that, at this moment the spell of the Risen Saviour is greater than that of the Earth-Spirit.

Aloft to yonder spheres I dare not soar,  
Whence sound the tidings of great joy ;  
And yet, with this sweet strain familiar when a boy,  
Back it recalleth me to life once more.  
Then would celestial love, with holy kiss,  
Come o'er me in the Sabbath's stilly hour,  
While, fraught with solemn meaning and mysterious power,  
Chimed the deep-sounding bell, and prayer was bliss ;  
A yearning impulse, undefined yet dear,  
Drove me to wander on through wood and field :  
With heaving breast and many a burning fear,  
I felt with holy joy a world reveal'd.  
Gay sports and festive hours proclaim'd with joyous pealing  
This Easter hymn in days of old ;  
And fond remembrance now, doth me, with childlike feeling,  
Back from the last, the solemn step, withhold.  
O still sound on, thou sweet celestial strain !  
The tear-drop flows,—Earth, I am thine again !—S.

In this last passage there are reminiscences of powerful incidents in Goethe's own many-coloured life. Strange as it seems when we think of the general character of his writings, Goethe had passed through the phase of evangelical piety as well as drunk deep of the spirit of rational denial. That he was not altogether a stranger to such experiences will be believed by readers of the "Confessions of a beautiful soul" in *Wilhelm Meister*. In its "totality of material," as Schiller

calls it, "Faust" was not to lack the specific Christian element. As we advance in the drama we shall see manifestations of a spirit very different from that of evangelical piety and Christian story, but whatever may have been Goethe's own final creed, it cannot be said that he was incapable of appreciating the depth and beauty of any historical faith.

It is now noon. The people have been up early on this Easter morning, and having first paid their devotions at the appointed shrines, are free to admire the beauties of spring and to enjoy one of their most prized holidays.

We are in Germany, remember, the benighted Germany of the sixteenth century, at a time when the Church really possessed the control of common life, —and yet what a scene of life and gladness! It is Easter-day, Sunday; the earliest hours are claimed by the Church, (say) till eleven o'clock, and then into Nature's own grand cathedral, where the natural worship of the heart may be rendered, and the day of the Risen One be indeed a Resurrection-day, no Sabbath of Puritanic gloom.

The people are streaming out of the old city gate; artisans, students, well-to-do citizens, servant-girls, prim burgher-maidens, beggars, soldiers singing in chorus. What a scene of activity! Every one with his peculiar dream of happiness, all drawn to the life.



Lastly (for this is the day on which the most secluded of students cannot stay at home) our scholarly pair, the Professor and his Famulus.

Having ascended one of the hills overlooking the town Faust surveys the scene—

Released from ice are brook and river  
By the quickening glance of the gracious Spring ;  
The colours of hope to the valley cling,  
And weak old Winter himself must shiver,  
Withdrawn to the mountains, a crownless king :  
Whence, ever retreating, he sends again  
Impotent showers of sleet that darkle  
In belts across the green o' the plain.  
But the sun will permit no white to sparkle ;  
Everywhere form in development moveth ;  
He will brighten the world with the tints he loveth,  
And, lacking blossoms, blue, yellow, and red,  
He takes these gaudy people instead.  
Turn thee about, and from this height  
Back on the town direct thy sight.  
Out of the hollow, gloomy gate,  
The motley throngs come forth elate :  
Each will the joy of the sunshine hoard,  
To honour the Day of the Risen Lord !  
They feel, themselves, their resurrection :  
From the low, dark rooms, scarce habitable ;  
From the bonds of Work, from Trade's restriction ;  
From the pressing weight of roof and gable ;  
From the narrow, crushing streets and alleys ;  
From the churches' solemn and reverend night,  
All come forth to the cheerful light.  
How lively, see ! the multitude sallies,  
Scattering through gardens and fields remote,

While over the river, that broadly dallies,  
Dances so many a festive boat ;  
And overladen, nigh to sinking,  
• The last full wherry takes the stream.  
Yonder afar, from the hill-paths blinking,  
Their clothes are colours that softly gleam.  
I hear the noise of the village, even ;  
Here is the People's proper Heaven ;  
Here high and low contented see !  
Here I am Man,—dare man to be !—T.

And now the pair reach a party of mirthful peasants. A clump of linden-trees offers a rallying-point to a motley group of all ages. Dressed in holiday attire, youths and maidens are dancing to a simple tune, exhilarated by the vigorous song whose sportive allusions are plainly appropriate to the occasion. As Faust and Wagner approach, the dance for a moment ceases, and all crowd round the famous Professor, offering him a cup of their best wine, proffered in thanks for his condescension in coming to be a spectator of their simple merriment. For this man, in earlier days, when his father was the physician of the place, risked his life in the time of pestilence, and had always been the poor man's friend. As they leave the scene Wagner cannot refrain from commenting upon this exhibition of respect. Oh, what a fortunate man to receive all this homage ! “ If you could only see a little further, you would not say so,” replies his companion ; “ my father and I should rather be

called destroyers than preservers ; our ignorant art killed more patients than it cured." This reply does not dismay the dull Wagner. "You did your best, and what physician could do more ?

Can man do more than with nice skill  
Practise the art transmitted from the past ?

By steady work you may bequeath the science of medicine to your son a little more certain than you yourself received it." It is a poor consolation to Faust that here and there a few clouds of error may in a lifetime be dispelled. But the day is already beginning to wane. And as the sun sinks, tinging vale and hill with a fresh beauty, and turning the silver brooklets into streams of gold, Faust forgets his cramping environment, and bursts forth :—

Lo ! where the sun sinks bright and bathes in light  
The huts with countless clustering leaves entwined !  
It sinks, the orb has lived his term of life,  
Yet westward wending, he recruits his ray.  
O for a wing to lift us from this strife,  
Plant me in heaven, and launch me on his way !  
Girt with the rich resplendence would I sail,  
And watch the wide world at my feet unroll'd,  
Each hill alit, a calm on every vale,  
And every brook a wandering thread of gold.  
Not all the savage mountains' soaring peaks  
Were barriers to impede my godlike flight,  
The spreading sea to her remotest creeks  
Lay as a way 'neath my undazzled sight.

The sun at length in night's cold clasp must fade,  
 But what avails my ardent course to bind ?  
 I chase the fleeting splendour undismay'd,  
 ' The day before me and the night behind,  
 The unbounded heaven above, the unbounded sea  
 Below.<sup>1</sup>

The obtuser Famulus, a little puzzled by this eloquent outburst, remarks :—

To strange conceits oft I myself must own,  
 But impulse such as this I ne'er have known ;  
 Not woods nor fields can long our thoughts engage.  
 Far otherwise the pleasures of the mind  
 Bear us from book to book, from page to page !  
 Then winter nights grow cheerful ; keen delight  
 Warms every limb ; and ah ! when we unroll  
 Some old and precious parchment, at the sight  
 All heaven itself descends upon the soul !—S.

The incorrigible bookworm, still only thinking of his musty tomes in the midst of these sunset glories. But the generous Faust replies, " Well for you that you only know one impulse in life, remain unconscious of all others. Misery flows from a divided consciousness ; in my breast there are dwelling two souls which cannot be harmonized—the one clinging with indomitable energy to earth and the things of earth, the other ever struggling to rise beyond the confines of this world into the illimitable. Would there were

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Richard Garnett, " Poems from the German," 1862.

spirits in the air who could carry me away on some magic cloak to a loftier and purer world ! ” This last wish disturbs the equanimity of his companion. The superstitious Wagner advises him to moderate his desires, for some of the mischief-making spirits who throng the air may really take him at his word, especially as the evening mists are now collecting, when these pernicious existences begin to stir and to hover around belated travellers. But Wagner’s warning comes already too late. Faust’s eye is fixed upon something which has a strange fascination for him—

Yon black hound  
Seest thou, through corn and stubble scampering round ?  
Note him ! what takest thou the brute to be ?

WAGNER.

But for a poodle whom his instinct serves  
His master’s track to find once more.

But the poodle, in narrowing circles, is coming ever nearer and nearer to the pair. This is surely the mark of some infernal being. But Wagner is too well up in demoniac lore not to know better than that—red saucer eyes, dusky wings, a grinning, malicious countenance, these are the marks of the only genuine imp. So he tries to soothe the perturbed Faust.

A very poodle he appears to be !  
Thou standest still, for thee he’ll wait ;

Thou speak'st to him, he fawns upon thee straight ;  
 Aught you may lose, again he'll bring,  
 And for your stick will into water spring.

No ; the black dog is not lurking there for the self-satisfied Wagner. Men of his stamp are not gifted with that second sight which discerns through the thick animal hide the real infernal core. What spirituality is not described in his books he cannot recognize ; and though the devil may be close behind his back he cannot perceive him. Devils don't appear to Wagners—perhaps neither do angels !

Faust's description of the advancing poodle is quoted by Goethe in his own "Farbenlehre" (Theory of Colours). He there remarks that the passage had long been written in poetic divination and half-consciousness when, in a subdued light, a black poodle ran along the street before his window, leaving a bright trail of light behind him, "the unclear after-image of his passing form." This is instanced *à propos* of a statement "that a dark object, as soon as it is removed, constrains the eye to see the same form bright."

I have little further to remark upon this scene, except that Goethe's native city of Frankfurt no doubt furnished the original of it. Even the linden-trees and the peasant's festival are accurately reproduced. The description of the physician's chemical preparations is given in the phraseology of the mediæval

alchemists. Goethe, I mentioned in a former lecture, had studied some of those quaint volumes, and knew the style of alchemists and magicians pretty well.

With regard to the credulity on the subject of spiritual presences, it is difficult for us to revive the feelings of our ancestors in this respect. At the period in question every province of Nature was believed to be tenanted by hosts of invisible beings, who were ever at hand to intermingle in the thoughts and actions of men. Thus in the following scene we shall find a reference to the spirits of the four elements, Salamanders (of fire), Undines (of water), Sylphs (of air and winds), and Kobolds or Gnomes (of subterranean places). Poetry may have lost somewhat by the relegation of this invisible throng into the domain of the unbelievable, but assuredly common humanity has gained in peace and comfort.

Faust, with the poodle close at his heels, re-enters his study, apparently a happier man for the varied experience of the day.

Behind me now lie field and plain,  
As night her veil doth o'er them draw,  
Our better soul resumes her reign  
With feelings of foreboding awe.  
Lull'd is each stormy deed to rest,  
And tranquillized each wild desire ;  
Pure charity doth warm the breast,  
And love to God the soul inspire.—S.

The poodle begins to snarl and scamper about the room. As a sop, Faust throws him his best cushion to lie on behind the stove.

Ah ! when within our narrow room,  
The friendly lamp again doth glow,  
An inward light dispels the gloom  
In hearts that strive themselves to know.  
Reason begins again to speak,  
Again the bloom of hope returns,  
The streams of life we fain would seek,  
Ah, for life's source our spirit yearns !—S.

The poodle snarls again ; these aspirations are not to his liking. The diseased soul is not however to be so quickly healed.

But ah ! E'en now I feel, howe'er I yearn for rest,  
Contentment welleteth up no longer in my breast.

In former times, when his mind's calm was temporarily disturbed, he had found consolation in the Christian scriptures, and now he reaches down from the shelf the Greek Testament, and opens the volume at the Gospel of St. John, to turn the ancient text into the familiar mother tongue.

• - In the beginning was the Logos. .

*Logos*—Word—such is the dictionary equivalent. But how can “ word ” express the writer's meaning ? “ Word,” however, stands plainly there, and, as a good Christian, he should, notwithstanding its ob-



security, accept the inspired author's statement; but the age of uncritical acquiescence is past, and moreover Faust, as mediator between two ages of the world, has not only to give the literal equivalent, but to bring the ancient into rapport with the modern mind. The word is only valuable as it conveys a meaning, render then—

In the beginning was the Sense.

Well, but that does not bring him much further. Sense or Thought—how can that be first? Thought or Idea cannot be the origin of things. How can the World be the expression of Intelligence alone? In Divine Wisdom what *Power*? Intelligence is merely perception and ratiocination; but a World is an efflux of energy, of creative faculty.

Is it the *Thought* which works, creates, indeed?

In the beginning was the *Power*, I read.

Faust has got nearer to the mark. As the metaphysician might say, he has passed Hegel for Schopenhauer, but is all plain now? Power, or Will, seems to let us more into the secret of a developing world than Reason and Logic, but the gap is still unfilled between Potentiality and Actuality. Step we in imagination as far back as we may, there is still merely Change and Becoming.

The Spirit aids me: now I see the light!

"In the beginning was the *Act*," I write.

Whereupon the poodle resumes his grating demonstrations. The barkings of the dog are all *à propos*, of course. The poodle is quieted when Faust honours him with his best cushion; he gives a low growl at the words:—

The streams of Life we fain would seek,  
Ah! for Life's source our spirit yearns.

That is not to the poodle's taste—Faust must not get on his high horse again, or it may be difficult to reduce him once more to the common level. But the dog cannot repress his delight at the words:—

In the beginning was the Act (or Deed).

From that moment the poodle begins to swell—rapidly expands to the size of a gigantic beast. Faust has stirred him to the quick, for he himself is getting further and further from the faith of the ancient evangelist. Why, already a Creator is superfluous—the Act is all—no Eternal Reason now, no Essential Energy—a mere ebb and flow of Becoming.

In the Faust-Legend, as recorded by Widmann of Hamburg, Mephistopheles, on making the compact with Faustus, allows him to read all the biblical books except the Gospel of John. The reason is, no doubt, to be found in the opening verses of that gospel. When Mephistopheles a little further on reveals his true nature, he declares himself to be a part of the original universal Darkness to which the

Light owed its existence. Bayard Taylor well suggests that in the close connection of Light and Life, and their antagonism to Darkness and Death, is to be found the cause of the Devil's aversion to this gospel, coupled of course with the asserted divine origin of the Logos or Christ. "In the beginning was the Word . . . in Him was Life, and the life was the light of men. And the Light shines in darkness—and the darkness comprehended it not."

The Devil in Goethe's poem has, however, no cause to regret Faust's recourse to this sacred book, for the efforts of the latter to comprehend the origin of things have landed him in the purest empiricism. The poodle swells. Faust now sees his first suspicion confirmed. This is no ordinary animal, but a spirit in bestial guise. The demon must be exorcised. And first the spell which constrains the spirits of the four elements:—

Salamander shall kindle,  
Writhe nymph of the wave,  
In air sylph shall dwindle,  
And kobold shall slave.

The spell is that of Solomon, who had the repute in the Middle Ages of being the arch-conjuror, the books containing instructions for exorcism being termed *Claviculae Salomonis* (Solomon's Keys). The elemental spirits here enumerated are rather tricky spirits than malicious imps; if any one of these inhere

in the poodle's hide, the animal will now explode in flame, or dissolve in water, or vanish as a meteoric star, or cringe at Faust's feet as a domestic Puck (Kobold).

But the beast does not stir.

He grins at me, untroubled as before;  
I have not hurt him in the least.

It is then no spirit of the elements, but a fiend of hell. No sooner has he let fall the word "Hell" than the hair of the beast begins to bristle. Now Faust expends all his art of exorcism; he will not desist until the infernal core is revealed.

Thou seest that mine is no idle threat;  
With holy fire I will scorch thee yet.<sup>1</sup>

The spell is successful without the need of resort-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe obtained his knowledge of conjuring arts from a curious book entitled "Faust's Höllenzwang" (Constraint of Hell). In a letter to Zelter he speaks of a neatly written manuscript of this book preserved in the ducal library at Weimar, which purported to be a transcript of a volume published at Passau in 1612. This book gives a complete list of the names of all the infernal spirits, dividing and subdividing them according to their rank and functions. Among the host are the names of seven "clever" spirits, the fleetest in their movements, and who can be employed for any purpose. At the head of these seven stands *Mephistophil*. This book likewise contains a considerable number of forms of conjuration. The sign in the text which has power to unmask the Evil One in the poodle's guise is the sign of the Cross.

ing to the final test, the sign of the Holy Trinity. The beast first dissolves in a vapour which fills the room, and then there emerges from behind the stove a member of a fraternity whom Faust would certainly not have taken all this trouble to invoke had he foreseen the issue.

This then the kernel of the brute!  
A travelling scholar! . . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

Thy name?

THE SCHOLAR.

The question trifling seems from one  
Who it appears the *Word* doth rate so low;  
Who, undeluded by mere outward show,  
To Being's depths would penetrate alone.

The genuine devil, from the first moment, with the incisive sarcasm. There is not only wit but wisdom in making Mephistopheles appear in the light of a travelling scholastic, about the last incarnation of the Spirit of Evil Faust is likely to be on his guard against just now. Indeed, he is immensely amused by this exhibition of the poodle's kernel, for these disputatious and empty-headed gentlemen had long afforded him only subject of mirth.

The conversation proceeds:—

Who then art thou?

Mephistopheles answers:—

Part of that Power,  
Which always wills the Bad and always works the Good.

A little too frank, one is tempted to think, for so cunning a personage. We must however denude the epithet "Bad" of its morally injurious connotation. Bad and good are here merely contrasts, including much more than the properly moral, as is clear from what follows.

FAUST.

What hidden mystery in this riddle lies?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The spirit I which evermore denies!  
And justly; for whate'er to light is brought  
Deserves again to be reduced to naught;  
Then better 'twere that naught should be.  
Thus all the elements which ye  
Destruction, Sin, or briefly, Evil, name,  
As my peculiar element I claim.—S.

This is quite in harmony with the prologue, where the Lord calls Mephistopheles a "spirit who denies."

Faust is still puzzled; for his strange guest calls himself a part, and yet he stands before him apparently a whole. Man in his vanity deems himself a whole, but Mephistopheles is more modest.

Part of the part am I, which at the first was all;  
A part of darkness, which gave birth to light.  
Proud light, who now his mother would enthrall,

but does not succeed, for light is bound up with the phenomenon Matter.

And so, I trust, when comes the final wreck,  
Light will, ere long, the doom of matter share.

Faust now begins to see into the nature of his visitor, which becomes clearer as Mephistopheles goes on to describe his efforts at destruction—the war he is always waging with the spirit of creation. Tempest, earthquakes, fire, floods, he has tried all in vain; still the human race survives, ever increasing, and though a million vegetable and animal seeds may never ripen, always enough remains to keep the thread of organic life unbroken. “Everything which ye human beings call Sin, Destruction, in short, the Bad (Evil), is my peculiar element.” Such is the declaration.

This then is the first chapter of the Devil’s “Gospel of John.” In the beginning reigned universal darkness. Then this darkness produced visible matter, and this visible matter has ever been encroaching on the domain of the original night or darkness; but the darkness is its sworn enemy, and as fast as the light brings aught to manifestation, the darkness strives to thrust it back into nonentity, and so there is a perpetual struggle between the productive and the destructive principle. And Mephistopheles becomes a part of that part which once was

all, but now is doomed to see its empire reduced to a smaller and smaller area.

Having unfolded his philosophy of Existence, the Devil is desirous of taking his leave, and craves Faust's permission. The latter is astonished at the request. There is the door, the window, the chimney even, at his service. But it appears there is a slight obstacle in the way of departure—the five-rayed star or pentagram on the threshold. How then, if Mephistopheles cannot leave, could he have entered? Well, the pentagram is ill-drawn, one of the outer angles is imperfect, and the dog, hurriedly entering, did not observe the perfection of the internal angles. (This pentagram is a figure easily drawn without lifting the pencil, consisting of three triangles, the triple symbol of the Holy Trinity.)

In sprang the dog, indeed, observing naught ;  
Things now assume another shape,  
The devil's in the house, and can't escape.

FAUST.

Why through the window not withdraw?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

For ghosts and for the devil 'tis a law,  
Where they stole in, there they must forth.

That the Devil is now within his power seems to be an agreeable discovery to Faust. He betrays his unwillingness to let so rare a visitor go, and the latter, who at first appeared in a hurry to depart,



expresses himself as quite prepared to remain, if Faust will allow him to extemporize an entertainment in which all the senses shall receive the fullest gratification, and the pleasure a year's effort could hardly procure be crowded into one short hour.

We must, I think, see in Mephistopheles' petition for dismissal a test of the preparedness of Faust's mind for the companionship of his tempter. I note in the difficulty of the pentagram only an unimportant artifice of the poet to motive this test. No matter how it happens, the Devil is there in Faust's study, and can only leave by the owner's permission. Faust's interest, which at first was only one of speculative curiosity, is practically excited when he finds the Devil is really at his mercy. There is then a chance of driving a bargain with his powerful prisoner, a chance he is unwilling to let slip. The test has proved successful—it is Faust, not the Devil, who is caught when the former is willing to partake of the latter's entertainment. The desired opportunity has arrived, an opportunity, as the Tempter imagines, to lead his victim on the downward course through the suggestion of sensuous pleasure. And Faust, having once consented to hold parley with the Devil, will be an easy victim; for deprived for so many years of the natural satisfactions no human being, even the loftiest, can forego save at the peril of moral insanity, the dreams that the spirits will send him will sink deep

into his brain, and will haunt him in his waking hours, until they cease to be mere images of the fancy, and are translated into palpable and glowing realities.<sup>1</sup>

•  
Vanish, ye darkling  
Arches above him!  
Loveliest weather,  
Born of blue ether,  
Break from the sky!  
O that the darkling  
Clouds had departed!  
Starlight is sparkling,  
Tranquiller-hearted  
Suns are on high.  
Heaven's own children  
In beauty bewildering,  
Waveringly bending,  
Pass as they hover;  
Longing unending  
Follows them over.  
They, with their glowing  
Garments, out-flowing,  
Cover, in going,  
Landscape and bower,  
Where, in seclusion,  
Lovers are plighted,  
Lost in illusion.  
Bower on bower!  
Tendrils unblighted!

<sup>1</sup> In the *Volks-Buch* of 1587, Mephistopheles, at the third interview, favours Faust with a magical diversion, "a humming," it is said, "as if monks were singing—an illusion which pleased Faust much."

Lo ! in a shower  
Grapes that o'ercluster  
Gush into must, or  
Flow into rivers  
Of foaming and flashing  
Wine, that is dashing  
Gems, as it boundeth  
Down the high places,  
And spreading, surroundeth  
With crystalline spaces,  
In happy embraces,    •  
Blossoming forelands,  
Emerald shore-lands !  
And the winged races  
Drink, and fly onward—  
Fly ever sunward  
To the enticing  
Islands, that flatter,  
Dipping and rising  
Light on the water !  
Hark, the inspiring  
Sound of their quiring !  
See, the entrancing  
Whirl of their dancing !  
All in the air are  
Freer and fairer.  
Some of them scaling  
Boldly the highlands,  
Others are sailing,  
Circling the islands ;  
Others are flying ;  
Lifeward all hieing,—  
All for the distant  
Star of existent  
Rapture and Love !—T.

We have thus reached the turning-point in Faust's career. The man whom we saw sleepless and perplexed as the curtain first rose upon him in his study, praying for rest and peace, but finding none, is lulled to slumber by the melodious murmurings of the Genii of Sense.

#### IV.

#### THE COMPACT—REJUVENESCENCE.

FAUST is again seated in his study, attired in the furred robe and baret of the academic dignitary, when a knock thrice repeated is given at the door, and enter a young nobleman arrayed in a red gold-brocaded tunic, a cloak of thick silk, hat with cock feather, and long sword. It is Faust's new companion come to urge him to doff the old man and put on the new, according to the pattern here presented to his gaze—then out into the world, free and unshackled, to have a taste of real living. The wearied man hardly casts a glance at the fine dress of his visitor. What matters it in what raiment he is clothed? The world is stale and valueless experienced in any dress. "I am too old for masquerading," he says, "Alas! also, too young to be without thirst for pleasure, but what is the good of roaming anywhither?"

What from the world have I to gain?  
Thou shalt abstain, renounce, refrain;

Such is the everlasting song  
 That in the ears of all men rings,—  
 That unrelieved, our whole life long,  
 † Each hour, in passing, hoarsely sings.—T.

Every day closes without a single wish fulfilled, and then comes the horrible night with its chase of wild dreams, even the boon of temporary apathy being denied; while the Power who reigns over the inner soul is impotent to control external forces. Existence is a blunder pure and simple, life utterly odious, death the only good to be desired.

And yet, desirable as seems life's extinction, Faust is reminded that on a certain night he refrained from draining the cup which would have brought about that valued result. The reminder kindles the hapless man into fury. It was not the fear of death that held him back, but the revival of old memories. "I was beguiled of my purpose by the recollection of early joys, but I now repent of my weakness. Be henceforth that and every sweet dream accursed!"

If, through th' abyss of terror stealing  
 Those touching sounds my purpose stay'd—  
 Some lingering touch of childish feeling,  
 With voice of merrier times betray'd—  
 I curse the more whate'er environs  
 The cheated soul with juggling shows,  
 Those heart's allurements, fancy's sirens,  
 That bind us to this den of woes.  
 A curse on all, one seed that scatters  
 Of hope from death our Name to save;

On all as earthly Good that flatters,  
 As Wife or Child, as Plough or Slave;  
 A curse on juice of Grapes deceiving,  
 On Love's wild thrill of raptures first;  
 A curse on Hoping, on Believing,  
 And Patience more than all be curst!<sup>1</sup>

The scorn is measureless. It is a concentrated expression of the whole baffled nature, as powerful as that which erewhile evoked the vast Spirit of earth from his obscure recesses,—and now there come fateful voices from invisible auditors attesting the awful imprecation.

Woe! Woe!  
 Thou hast destroy'd  
 The beautiful world  
 With violent blow;  
 'Tis shiver'd! 'tis shatter'd!  
 The fragments abroad by a demigod scatter'd!  
 Now we sweep  
 The wrecks into nothingness!  
 Fondly we weep  
 The beauty that's gone!  
 Thou, 'mongst the sons of earth,  
 Lofty and mighty one,  
 Build it once more!  
 In thine own bosom the lost world restore!  
 Now with unclouded sense  
 Enter a new career;  
 Songs shall salute thine ear,  
 Ne'er heard before!—S.

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Thomas Carlyle, *Athenaeum*, Jan. 7, 1832, No. 219.

The first half of the chant is a dirge, the second reveals the only way of salvation that remains open. The old edifice that has sheltered Faust for these many years has fallen irreparably into ruins ; all those grand visions of Truth, of a fairer world of the Ideal, are fled never to return. He is already a changed man. He has broken utterly with his past. The question to be now answered is,—Has he a future ?

His visitor steps forward and offers to open for him a brighter world than he has yet known. And what reward shall be rendered for so handsome a favour ? Well, if Faust will return the compliment in the world beyond, the Devil will render him ungrudging service here. As a *bargain* it seems to Faust fair enough, for the joys and sorrows of this life are the only things that are certain—time enough to think about the way of spending our leisure hours in that other world when we get there. But why waste words about bargains of mutual service ? What service can a Devil render to a Faust ? Faust is sceptical of the possibility of happiness in any form. All the world is deluded and deluding, there is no faith nor honesty anywhere ; those fruits that look so pleasing to the eye are Sodom apples which rot as soon as they are touched. There is no help for it, a Tantalus doom is that of man, always stooping to the bubbling stream, and yet never assuaging his thirst for the briefest possible moment. I will, however,



willingly make a bargain with you, O Tempter, in these terms—the unforced admission of perfect self-satisfaction:—

When thus I hail the moment flying :  
*Ah, still delay—thou art so fair !*  
Then bind me in thy bonds undying,  
My final ruin then declare !  
Then let the death-bell chime the token,  
Then art thou from thy service free !  
The clock may stop, the hand be broken,  
Then Time be finished unto me !—T.

The Devil is more than contented. Let the compact be signed and sealed on the spot. What! a paper bond? The far-seeing Devil a pettifogging lawyer? When the universe is changing every hour, to imagine that a moody mortal can be bound by any external seal! If the man's very being does not harmonize with the promise, what can avail any amount of parchment and seals? However, a signature in the contractor's own blood is something in the Devil's eyes particularly constraining, and so he gets his formally-conclusive document.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compacts ratified by the blood of those who take part in them are very ancient. See *e.g.* Herodotus, book iv., c. 70. In the treatment of the Theophilus-legend, described in my first lecture, of the thirteenth century, the compact with the Devil is ratified with the blood of the erring man, and the pact with Mephostophiles is sealed in like manner in the first form of the Faust-legend, the book of 1687, and in Marlowe. It is not im-

Fear not that I this pact shall seek to sever !  
 The promise that I make to thee  
 Is just the sum of mine endeavour.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let us the sensual deeps explore,  
 To quench the fervours of glowing passion !  
 Let every marvel take form and fashion  
 Through the impervious veil it wore !  
 Plunge we in Time's tumultuous dance,  
 In the rush and roll of Circumstance !—T.

•

Yes, is the reply, catch all the bliss you can ; you may have as much as you can hold. I am not talking of bliss, answers the impetuous Faust ; I will plunge in the world's maddest turmoil, take upon myself all its pain, no less than all its joy. The whole world's agony shall be mine. Fine talk, answers Mephistopheles, a whole is not for petty mortal man. You may try as vigorously as you please to expand yourself to the dimensions of a world-spirit, in vain. You are only a part, and a very unimportant part too. Make the most of that which is within your power, map out your life-course according to its possibilities, not according to your great scheme of universal feeling. There is ample scope enough even for the vast mind

probable that this special form of ratification in the Christian legends owes its origin to a parody of the shedding of the Saviour's blood for human redemption, regarding that act as the ratification of a compact between the Almighty and His condescending Son. In early Protestant phraseology the Devil is frequently styled the *ape* of God.

of a Faust, if he will consent to use the opportunities that are actually presented to him, and not hanker after what is certainly beyond his reach.

FAUST.

Then how shall we begin ?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We'll try a wider sphere.

What place of martyrdom is here !

Is 't life, I ask, is 't even prudence,

To bore thyself, and bore the students ?

Let Neighbour Paunch to that attend !

Why plague thyself with threshing straw for ever ?

The best thou learnest, in the end

Thou dar'st not tell the youngsters—never !

I hear one's footsteps hither steering.—T.

Quick, give me your cap and gown, and let me receive the lad, and do you hastily equip yourself for your fine trip.

From the scene thus briefly sketched we perceive that Faust's mind has not been stationary since his first interview with the mysterious stranger. He has been cured of one disease, the craving for unlimited knowledge. But the aim which has so long directed his life-course being abandoned, there is no other ready to take its place. But we begin, I think, to discern pretty clearly the sort of man we are dealing with, and are able to foresee why Faust's earthly pilgrimage must be along a path of thorns and briars. Mephistopheles characterizes him exactly when he says :—

Fate such a bold, untrammelled spirit gave him,  
As forwards, onwards, ever must endure ;  
Whose over-hasty impulse drove him  
Past earthly joys he might secure.

That is the man—the Faust whom the Lord in the Prologue tenderly regards ; the man with unbounded desires and unbounded aspirations. Why has Faust buried himself in his books all these years, abjuring the world and all the pleasures which attract other men ? Why, because in his student days one splendid dream took his reason captive, and he dedicated himself without an instant's hesitation to a life-long attempt to realize it. He would *know* everything, would sound the depths and scale the heights of Total Truth. But no ideal, even the fair one of Truth, is by itself sufficient to guide man over the dangerous ocean of human existence. For safe voyaging charts and maps are required, and attention to endless details, the want of which will expose a mariner to shipwreck although his eye be fixed ever on the Polar Star. But though his early confidence has received a rude shock, the old error is going to be repeated in a new form. Before he surrendered himself to the sole pursuit of Knowledge, now he is going to have no other life but that of *feeling*. Nothing will content him now but unlimited joy and sorrow. Draining passion's cup to its very dregs, he will lead no regulated life, experience no measured emotion ; but, turning neither to right hand

nor to left, he will "explore the sensual deeps," and will let his heart bleed with the anguish of the world. The Devil knows well the man he has to deal with, and he is confident of attaining his prize. He sees clearly enough the tragedies that are throwing their shadows before. He beholds his victim floundering out of one slough into another, and hopelessly exclaiming:—

Thus in desire I hasten to enjoyment,  
And in enjoyment pine to feel desire.

The direct contrast to Faust is Mephistopheles himself. One-sided theorist and enthusiast as the former is, equally one-sided in his practicality is the other. Faust is always falling into ditches because he is ever gazing at distant stars and neglecting common facts; Mephistopheles is always cheated of his prize because his calculations are made on too limited a scale. Mephistopheles is quite as blind as Faust, though the blindness is due to a directly contrary procedure. Though he will not be a laughing-stock to others by always trying to seize the moon and finding in his grasp nothing but moon-*shine*, he will make the equally absurd mistake of expecting to gather grapes from thorns and figs from thistles. Needful enough as Mephistopheles is, as companion to whoever would walk warily upon this earth, woe betide the man who surrenders himself wholly to his

guidance! Faust dwells ever in the realm of imagination, of the Ideal, which, regarded from the level of fact, is simply illusion; Mephistopheles is pure and simple materialism, the sworn foe of all idealism, all enthusiasm; seen from *his* standpoint, the heart of man is nothing more than so much galvanized tissue. I think we know the antithetic pair. We mark the ecstatic smile of the one, which bears a close resemblance to the maniac's laughter; we hear the scornful chuckle of the other, whose note of self-satisfaction makes us involuntarily shudder.

Such are the pair in their fully contrasted characters, but there are times when they seem to change parts, and unless we are well on our guard would not be quite sure which is aspiring man and which is devil. Although the aim of Mephistopheles is clear—to reduce Faust to the lowest material level—it is needful for him sometimes in pursuance of that very plan to throw up suggestions that savour of idealism, and Faust in his mad pursuit occasionally sinks so rapidly that even the Devil finds it difficult to keep pace with him. Thus, at the opening of the present scene, could there be a lower deep than Faust's blank despair and fierce imprecations? No Truth, no Hope, no Love—all the world a ghastly lie. Does Hell lie deeper than that? But the Devil does not, as one might expect, find to his taste such language on the lips of Faust, and he sends a band of invisible imps,

who seem wonderfully akin to angelic beings, to sing to the despairing man strains of hope. The Devil is shrewd enough to know that with a man like Faust, such a desponding note, deeper than ever heard from ordinary men, will not last. Mockers as he is at the moment, he is not a mocker at heart, and therefore not now the Devil's prey. It is the aim of the Devil to strip off all illusions, to make Man dwell in the region of the barest fact, to crush the least spark of desire to look higher than the actual—to *rebrutalize* him. But a long course of training is necessary for that, longer the higher the nature to be educated. It will be the cue of this spirit that denies or degrades, by every possible contrivance and insinuation to drag Faust down from his lofty idealism, to accustom him to the world's meanest estimate—and, lower still, to give him a permanent relish for the most soulless joys.

The thoughtful reader cannot fail to be struck by the accordance, in part, of the foregoing with a phase of the creed of the modern pessimist,—the assertion, namely, that the progress of human development signifies the gradual awakening from illusions—illusion of personal happiness, illusion of a blessed hereafter, illusion of a glorious future for the human race—every age as it arrives seeing more clearly into the essential barrenness and worthlessness of existence. In such a sceptical mood do we find our Faust at the opening of the present

scene. And thereby he invokes an agency which destroys the fairest world he had hitherto known.

Woe! woe!  
Thou hast it destroyed  
The beautiful world  
With powerful fist:  
The scattered  
Fragments into the void we carry,  
The beauty perished beyond restoring.—T.

(An illusion once laid bare, it is true the beauty of the object hitherto so radiant with ideal hues is irrevocably gone; moreover, the advance of knowledge must be attended by the removal of illusions,—but fast as one illusion is cut away, lo! another springs up in its place; so the world never loses its lustre, though the halo be shifted from one cherished head to another.)

Faust, though he talks pessimism, is really optimist. He will surrender his soul, he says, whenever that moment, deemed by him impossible, arrives which he shall bid delay because it is so fair. The Devil assents, not because he believes there is such a thing as perfect happiness, but because he holds that once drifted from the moorings of the Ideal Faust must perforce become reanimalized, and that as the animal displaces the man, the thermometer of happiness will attain a higher and higher degree. The lower in the scale of organized existence, the higher the degree of satisfaction—such is the creed of the pessimist, and, if the world be measured in terms of personal



pleasure, from that standpoint the assertion of satisfaction with our lot is a mark of having fallen to a lower plane than the one we started from, of having become the Devil's prize.

While Faust is arraying himself in a dress of the man of the world, Mephistopheles, attired in the professor's robe, is giving audience to a new applicant for a draught from wisdom's springs, pointing out the relative advantages of the various branches of academic study. Much as I should like to linger over this inimitable interview, so rich in matter of reflection, both positively and negatively, I must (mindful of my main purpose) resist the temptation, and take up the story again with the reappearance of the Doctor prepared for his expedition. I will only remark that Mephistopheles, in "Faust's long robe," satirizes the conventional university education, and describes the nature of the studies of philosophy, law, and theology as they now appear to Faust after the prolonged experience of the discipline of the schools—the Devil speaking, however, again in his own character when the province of medicine is reached. After such an introduction, Mephistopheles' aside, on the student retiring with the motto inscribed by the professor in his album—

Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil,

will no doubt be amply justified :—

Follow the ancient text, and the snake thou wast order'd to  
trample,

With all thy likeness to God thou'lt yet be a sorry example!

Faust returns dressed in a suit corresponding to  
that of Mephistopheles.

Now the question is "Whither shall we go?"  
Well, everything in order:

The little world and then the great we'll see.

Faust has only to confide in himself, and all will go  
swimmingly.

• MEPHISTOPHELES.

Time, my good friend, will all that's needful give:

Be only self-possessed, and thou hast learned to live.

To quiet all conscience-pangs concerning the abrupt abandonment of his post, Mephistopheles thinks his friend may just as well see some of the precious pupils, for whom he has been wasting a lifetime, at their studies, and bid them a tender adieu. Should there be any lingering regret for the old love it is possible this last argument may settle the matter. Accordingly to Leipzig, down a flight of steps in a street near the market-place—the vaults of one Auerbach. The real name of the owner is Stromer, but he is called Auerbach after his Bavarian birth-place. In Vogel's "Annals of Leipzig" (published in 1714), under the date of 1530 we read "This year Auerbach's Hotel was built by Herr Heinrich Stromer, otherwise called Auerbach, Doctor and Decanus of

Philosophy and Medicine, eminent Councillor, formerly Physician in Ordinary to the Electors of Brandenburg and Mainz, and the Elector Friedrich of Saxony." Accordingly a man of no slight importance; and that he was liberal in opinion, as well as learned, we may conclude from the circumstance that in the year 1519 he invited the then rather shunned Martin Luther to dine with him on the occasion of the latter visiting Leipzig to dispute with Doctor Eck. That the name of Faust has been connected with a man of this stamp is very suggestive as to the character of the real Doctor Faust. It seems to confirm a suspicion hinted at in my first lecture, excited by the fact of almost all the injurious notices of his life emanating from members of the Church, that the myth of the compact with the Devil is the poetical description of the proper fate of a man with an exceptional freedom from vulgar superstition and a passion for independent research. But we are on the ground of legend now, and need not attempt to sever fact from fiction.

The scene of Goethe's poem to which we are about to be introduced is much indebted to the old legend, and it will be well, therefore, in order not to lose the aroma of the ancient fable, to examine the sources whence he drew it. In Widmann's "*Wahrhaftigen Historien*," &c., published in 1599, we read "Some foreign students from Hungary, Poland, Carinthia, and Austria, who often visited Doctor Faust in Wittenberg,

begged him, it being the time of Leipzig fair, to go thither with them. Doctor Faust did so, and the following day he took a walk with them to see the town; they passed by a cellar where the coopers were vainly trying to bring out a cask which contained about two hogsheads. Doctor Faust and his companions looked on at the workmen for some time in silence; then Doctor Faust pleasantly rallied them as fellows: 'You lazy fellows, so sturdy as you are, and yet you cannot manage a cask like that! Any one of you could move it if he chose.' The coopers, a despicable class, were enraged at this taunt, and answered him bluntly that if he knew so much about it, let him, in the devil's name, give them a hand, and not rail at them. Meanwhile the proprietor had arrived, who, learning the cause of the dispute, said, 'Very well, I will put the matter to the test; he who single-handed can roll out the cask shall have it for himself.' Thereupon Faust entered the cellar, bestrid the cask as were it a horse, and thus seated emerged from the cellar. All were astounded; the proprietor was terrified, could not trust his eyes, but he was obliged to keep his promise, and to give up the cask to Faust, who handed it over to his companions, who invited some other good fellows, and they all enjoyed themselves to their hearts' content, no one leaving before the cask was dry."

On one of the walls of the subterranean chambers

still known as Auerbach's Cellar, there is a picture in which Faust is represented seated on the cask going out at the doorway, while the host, coopers, and students are looking on in amazement with uplifted hands. The artist has added, however, a mischievous little poodle at Faust's back, who no doubt was at the bottom of the marvel. The incident is dated 1525 on the picture.

In this same cellar there is another picture which possibly may represent the jollification, to which the above narrative alludes, after the magical ride. Faust is seated at one end of the table in fur cloak and cap, three students sit at his left with their beer-pots, and there are five others performing on different instruments. A lad is at Faust's right hand to draw the beer, and the poodle completes the picture.<sup>1</sup>

There is one more legend to mention, recorded by Philip Camerarius, who wrote a book called "Leisure Hours" in 1602. He says, "We know that among the enchanters and magicians in the time of our fathers, John Faust of Kundlingen, who studied magic at Cracow, acquired great renown, so much so that there is hardly anybody who cannot tell a story of his art. . . . One day he met at Table some people who had heard about his magical tricks, and who asked him to exhibit some specimen of his

<sup>1</sup> The descriptions in the text are in accordance with the engravings in Scheible's "Kloster," Fifth Cell, pp. 16 and 17.

magic. He was at first very reluctant, but yielding at last to the importunity of the banqueters, who were scarcely sober, he promised to show them whatever they desired. Having consulted together, they asked that he might let them see a vine covered with ripe grapes. They thought that as it was then the wrong time of year (about mid-winter), he could not possibly perform this feat. He acceded to their request, and promised that at once, without leaving the table, they should see a vine such as they wished for; but on this condition, that they all remained in their places and waited in perfect silence until he ordered them to gather the grapes; if they disobeyed, they would lose their lives. All having promised implicit obedience, suddenly Faust by his enchantment charmed in such a way the eyes and imaginations of the intoxicated crowd that they seemed to see bunches of grapes of wonderful size and very juicy, on a very fine vine, as many in number as there were people seated at the table. Excited by the novelty of the thing, disordered moreover by drink, they took their knives, and waited for Faust's signal to cut the grapes. Faust gave himself the pleasure of keeping them some time in this state of suspense and illusion; then all at once the vine and the grapes melted into vapour, and they found that each one had taken his neighbour's nose for a bunch of grapes, and held a knife to cut it, so that if they had cut their

grapes without Faust's order, they would have cut off each other's noses." <sup>1</sup>

Let us now return to Goethe, and see how he has made use of these legendary materials.

Four university students are seated at a wooden table in Herr Auerbach's place of entertainment. They all possess a certain individuality. There is a nimble shallow character with the appropriate name of Frog; a more refined youth, somewhat inflammable in temperament, Brander; a third, Siebel, rather more seasoned, with a bald head and inclining to corpulence; and last, a sharp fellow, Altmayer, incredulous of everything but his own shrewdness. They have their wine before them (not of the choicest), and, though usually merry enough, are to-day somewhat subdued, perhaps awed by some undefinable presentiment. At last the light-minded Frosch (Frog) pours a glass of wine over Brander's head to stimulate his torpid powers, a proceeding likely to be provocative of a quarrel, which, however, is nipped in the bud by the stentorian Siebel. The lively Frosch then strikes up a tune, condemned by his nettled comrade Brander as a song political, and therefore unsuitable to festive occasions. At last Brander himself ventures upon a choice ditty of a poisoned rat, with palpable allusions to the striking appearance of friend Siebel, at the

<sup>1</sup> *Operae horarum subcisivarum. Centuria Prima. Philippo Camerario auctore. 1602. Pp. 314, 315.*

close of which Mephistopheles and Faust enter the cellar attired as travellers.

**MEPHISTOPHELES.**

I now must introduce to you  
Before aught else this jovial crew,  
To show how lightly life may glide away.

The "jovial crew," fancying the new-comers are not quite at their ease, are minded to divert themselves at their expense, and the vivacious Frosch essays to draw them out. But Mephistopheles is a match for him, and Frosch brings the laugh upon himself. Mephistopheles remarks he heard singing as they entered, and if the company are agreeable, is prepared to give them a ditty of Spain, from which land he and his friend have just arrived. Of course the company are delighted, and Mephistopheles entertains them with the ballad of a certain tall Flea, who, after being duly furnished by the king with appropriate and accurately fitting garments, attained to the post of Minister of State, and plagued all the Court notables, no one, however, daring to lay hands upon him. It is thought there is here some Goethean satire of a personal nature, but we need not concern ourselves with the question. Enough, the burden of the song is that other people (young Germany especially) would not be so tender of Court parasites; and the democratic Altmayer proposes "a health to Freedom."



Mephistopheles would also gladly drink to Freedom's health if there was better wine on the table, which Siebel bids him not say a second time. To pacify him Mephistopheles offers to give a taste of his own vintage. He then bores holes in the table opposite the puzzled guests, bids them plug the holes with corks, and not draw till he gives the word, at the same time desiring each one to choose his wine.<sup>1</sup> At a signal from Mephistopheles they draw the corks, and excellent wine flows from the wood, with which they repeatedly fill their glasses, being at last wound up to such a pitch of delight that they all burst out in chorus—

As 'twere five hundred hogs we feel  
So cannibalic jolly !

Mephistopheles, with a manifest allusion to a recent toast, observes to Faust—

See, now, the race is happy—it is free !

Faust, who has been a silent and reluctant spectator the whole time (having only said "Good morrow, gentlemen," on entering), observes, "I fain would leave." "First, the full development of *bestiality*," replies his guide. Siebel drinking carelessly and spilling the wine on the ground, it turns to flame,

<sup>1</sup> The original of this incident is to be found in the enlarged edition of the Faust-book of 1590.

kindling his wrath. The same occurs to Altmayer, and now the whole party draw their knives and rush on Mephistopheles, when the latter charms them into peace, and in pairs they face each other, laying hold of one another's noses, exclaiming, "What a beautiful country, what splendid grapes!" Then Mephistopheles, with the words—

Loose, Error, from their eyes the band,

disappears with Faust. No sooner have they left than the boon companions recover from their delusion, and cannot tell what to make of it all—the clever Altmayer stoutly averring that he saw Mephistopheles vanish from the cellar on a wine-cask.

And so ends Faust's initiation into the real world. He had asked to "explore the sensual deeps," and here he touches bottom. The Devil, however, was certainly shrewd enough to foresee that this experience would not afford much satisfaction. Faust enters the cellar only to wish himself away. If the Devil is to get Faust's soul, a finer bait than this must be offered, and this the clever fiend knows well enough, but as Faust has asked to traverse the whole world of human feeling, it is fitting he should for once see what kind of enjoyment suffices some of his fellow-beings.

From the cellar where vinous potations warm the hearts of not over-fastidious mortals, to the Witch's Kitchen, in which a finer, but still material beverage

is brewed, is no great step, and we now find Faust and his crafty guide in an environment at once strange and bewildering. A kettle is hissing on a low hearth ; beside it sits a wonderful beast, half-cat, half-monkey, of the female sex, carefully watching that the liquid does not boil over. Her consort and their progeny are warming themselves hard by, and all round the cave hang the fantastic implements of the witch's art. This suggests a different kind of incantation to the high magic of the book of the sages, and Faust is both disgusted and depressed at the spectacle.

Must I seek counsel of an ancient dame.  
And can she by these rites abhorred  
Take thirty winters from my frame?

Yes, it is in this kitchen that Faust is to be made young again, and the inspirer of sensuous desire is the only person in the world who can now effect that. An equivocal physician, perhaps, but the best remaining to an ascetic of fifty years.

The art of rejuvenation is beyond the Devil's own power,—

The Devil taught her, it is true,  
But yet the draught the Devil can't brew:

The Devil, it will be observed, throughout the whole drama never does anything himself to change Faust's physical or mental condition. He suggests, contrives, uses both circumstances and persons as instruments,

but never himself directly acts upon Faust. He is essentially a spirit of suggestion, not a constructive genius.

Why must Faust resort to magical aid for the attainment and preservation of youth? Is this end not to be attained by natural means? Yes, there is a way, but it is scouted by Faustian natures: To live in the narrowest circle of ideas, to rise early and cultivate with own hand the soil, eat the coarsest food, and have no companions but unlettered boors,—in other words, to keep close to the first conditions of mere existence and not hanker after the refinements of civilization, in this way ruddy health may infallibly be secured, but little more.

Such a contracted existence does not suit a Faust, and as, therefore, he will be the child of art and culture, he must go to art and culture for his spring of youth. But what is the nature of this art, what is the composition of the magical potion, and who is its concocter? Mephistopheles has given the recipe; he cannot himself brew the drink, for that something more than science is required—endless patience.

Goethe never vouchsafed an explanation of these enigmas, and the commentators of "Faust" are utterly helpless. It is easy to evade such difficulties by saying that Goethe wrote intentional nonsense—and a gentle rebuke which he administered to his super-subtle admirers has been tortured into such an

admission—but it is incredible that the riddling lines alluded to are juggling words and nothing more. The object of this scene is to make Faust, a man who “has scorned delights and lived laborious days” until he is sick at once of science and life, at a mature period of his existence have the feelings which, had his career been normal, he would have already in a measure survived. It must be a strong potion that can make such a desiccated closet-student lose the consciousness of thirty years of existence. Now the genius who could efface this could hardly be a male genius, as Mephistopheles. The enchanter must be symbolized as a female power, and must be mistress of all the mysterious ingredients that go to the inflaming the human heart. And, although she may have learnt her lesson from the restless spirit that is ever goading humanity into action, the potion will require the patient cooking of ages to bring it to maturity. Mephistopheles is unreal, the Witch is real. What can she be then but the organic impulse of passion, and above all sexual passion, which has taken ages on ages to evolve, that mysterious agency which is “deep-seated in our mystic frame,” which, unbalanced by the intellectual *nisus*, is an overpowering material orgasm, and as such may be said to be of devil-origin. That this orgasm is no simple thing, but compounded of numberless subtle-working ingredients, physical and psychical, is perfectly true, and the dry,

critical understanding as typified by Mephistopheles is certainly impotent to evoke it.

Apart from the main theme, there is much by-play in this scene, and as it is the Witch's Kitchen the author felt at liberty to indulge in some frolics of his own.

The long-tailed monkeys now commence their sportive gambols. The male parent asks Mephistopheles to throw the dice for him, which will make him rich in a trice. For—

Alas, for myself!

Had I plenty of pelf,

I then should be *wise*!

The juvenile monkeys play with a large ball, the he-ape accompanying its revolution with a comment. The world-ball is hollow, volcanic flaming, now here, now there. But it is brittle, and will first come to rest and then be shivered into fragments—a dull, dead thing at the best, not alive as the speaker.

The he-ape takes down a sieve, and calls his spouse to spy through at Mephistopheles, and find out whether he be a thief. It was one of the modes of detecting thieves in the Middle Ages, to take a sieve or other round article, tie a string to it, and hold it by the finger and thumb. The names of the suspected persons were then called, and on the right one being named, the sieve was expected to revolve.<sup>1</sup> The he-ape then

<sup>1</sup> Had Goethe lived in the days of table-turning he might have been suspected of poking fun at the Spiritists. There is perhaps, however, an allusion to clairvoyance.

constrains Mephistopheles to take a whisk and seat himself on the settle. \*

All this time Faust has been gazing in a wonderful mirror, which reflects a reclining female form. He can only see the figure at a certain distance, for if he approaches nearer it becomes obscure. Lost in admiration, he exclaims :—

Is 't possible ! has woman charms so rare ?  
Is this recumbent form supremely fair  
The very essence of all heavenly grace ?  
Can aught so exquisite on earth be found ?

Mephistopheles answers :—

Just such a prize for thee I can provide.

We have here the first note of a tune which will rise and fall as the poem proceeds, but never be entirely hushed. We shall hear the music grow richer and fuller as we proceed, until its distant echo reaches us in the mystical chorus of the higher world.

Mephistopheles sits comfortably on his settle as throne, twirling his whisk for sceptre, inwardly delighted at the potent working of the mirror-phantom, when the monkeys bring a clay crown, desiring him to cement it with sweat and blood, but their awkward handling allows it to slip to the ground, where it is shattered.

\* The crown to be cemented with sweat and blood is

doubtless referential to the crushing rule of monarchs, and the shattered crown *may* refer to the fracture of regal authority exemplified by the great French revolution. If so, from their expressions, the apes will represent the democracy, who suddenly attain to perception and speech—to the full exercise of their natural rights, in fact.<sup>1</sup>

And if (and Goethe always distrusted popular governments) things chance to turn out well by good luck, the incoherent stammerings of the people will change to orderly political ideas.<sup>2</sup>

But now the caldron, neglected by the female ape, boils over, and, with a cry of pain, the Witch comes hurriedly down the chimney. Infuriated she plunges her ladle into the caldron, and throws the liquid about her, singeing the unlucky beasts, but making no impression on Faust and Mephistopheles, except to stir the wrath of the latter for not being recognized as proper lord and master. The Witch excuses herself on the ground that the conventional signs of the infernal are wanting, when Mephistopheles explains that modern culture has not left even the Devil unaffected.

<sup>1</sup> Crown breaks—

• • 'Tis done, let it be !

We speak, and we see,

We hear and we rhyme !

If lucky our hits,

And everything fits,

'Tis thoughts, and we're thinking !



Horns and claws are out of date, and even the old names are obsolete, but the change is only of form, not of substance.

Rid of the evil one the evil has remained.

Both parties being pacified, Mephistopheles begs of the Witch one of her strongest potions for his friend. The Witch describes a circle, fetches a book, stations the monkeys as a desk, and beckons Faust to approach. She then solemnly reads :—

This must thou ken :  
Of one make ten,  
Pass two, and then  
Make square the three,  
So rich thou'lt be.  
Drop out the four !  
From five and six,  
Thus says the witch,  
Make seven and eight.  
So all is straight.  
And nine is one,  
And ten is none,  
This is the witch's one-time-one.

(Multiplication Table.)—S.

Little wonder that Faust should exclaim :—

The hag doth as in fever rave.

But there is after all some method in her madness. The virtue supposed to inhere in numbers is an old story. Pythagoras converted numbers into entities, and there have been other tricks played with numbers since then, as Mephistopheles suggests :—

'Tis still the fashion as it used to be,  
Error instead of truth abroad to send  
By means of three and one, and one and three.  
'Tis ever taught and babbled in the schools.  
Who'd take the trouble to dispute with fools?  
When words men hear, in sooth, they usually believe  
That there must needs therein be something to conceive.—S.

In Eckermann's reminiscences of Goethe's conversations, under the date January the 4th, 1824, Goethe is reported to have said, "I believed in God and Nature, and in the victory of the noble over the worthless; but this was not enough for the pious souls, I must also believe that Three is One, and One Three; which, however, was opposed to the feeling of my soul for truth; I also did not see that I could be helped thereby even in the slightest degree."<sup>1</sup>

Besides the allusion to the Trinity in the speech of Mephistopheles, there is perhaps also a hit at the dialectic subtleties of Fichte and Hegel.

But the Witch now utters deep wisdom, though Faust does not comprehend it, when she continues:—

The lofty power  
Of wisdom's dower,  
\* \* From all the world conceal'd!

<sup>1</sup> In Oxenford's translation, published in 1850 (now in Bohn's Standard Library), you will find the above statement perverted (and diluted) into "I was also pressed to believe *other points* (!) . . . which were opposed," &c.

Who thinketh not,  
To him I wot,  
Unsought it is revealed.

The speaker is Goethe in the witch's mask. For it was with him a firm conviction that man obtains deeper insight by letting his mind be passively open to the influence of Nature than by resolving the Universe into abstractions and laws, and trying to comprehend it by the logical understanding.

The Witch at last offers Faust the draught which the latter swallows, having first drawn back at the light flame which springs from it as he puts the cup to his lip.<sup>1</sup> The potion is quaffed. Now no further tarrying—at once active work or the draught will lose its power. Faust prays:—

Let me but gaze one moment in the glass!  
Too lovely was that female form!

Needless! it is but a phantom; in a very short time there will be something more palpable than a mirror's image to gaze upon; and in a low voice not meant for his companion's ear Mephistopheles adds:—

As works the draught thou presently shall greet  
A Helen in each woman thou dost meet.

<sup>1</sup> Wherever there is flame, the Devil has always some hand in the business.

And so the long pent-up impulses will henceforth have free play, and Faust will be for the first time in his life truly human, although, as we shall see, with the untameable impetuosity of his nature on the one hand, and the sudden thawing of a heart congealed for twenty years on the other, the emotional explosion when it comes will be terrific in its fury.

An opportunity has not long to be waited for. It is midday. Faust is passing a church, when his attention is arrested by a beautiful young girl just coming from confession. Without an instant's hesitation he steps up to her:—

Fair lady, may I thus make free,  
To offer you my arm and company?

The reply of the damsel, who hastily passes on, is equally abrupt:—

I am no lady, am not fair,  
Can without escort home repair.

Although the encounter has been momentary, Faust's imagination is inflamed to the highest degree, and to the approaching Mephistopheles he impatiently declares his desire to possess so rare a gem. With difficulty Mephistopheles convinces him that in the real world matters do not go so quickly. Besides, what would human pleasure be worth if there were no interval of suspense between desire and fruition?

—positive actual enjoyment has very definite limits of durability.

Finally the thwarted Faust has to be contented with Mephistopheles' promise to visit Gretchen's room in her absence.

Arrived there, the influences of the place are so potent as entirely to change Faust's mental attitude. Although just before with the fumes of the witch's potion affecting his brain he was too baldly sensual even for the Devil, now his feeling is so refined and spiritualized that Mephistopheles has to exert all his cunning to revive a trace of the earlier mood. Even the offering of a gift, which was the poor best he was obliged to put up with before, Faust begins to think too bold a proceeding, and Mephistopheles has himself to put the present into the cupboard, and almost to drag his companion from the room, lest the repentant intruder stay to beg forgiveness and take an eternal farewell. Margaret returning is aware of a precisely contrary atmosphere in the room to that which Faust had felt. An inexplicable shudder comes over her, and under the influence of these impressions she sings a pathetic ballad of a king whose dying mistress gave him a golden cup, from which he always drank on festal occasions, not without moistened eye, and which, when himself dying, he flung into the sea that no other lip might touch it—his own life-flame expiring as it sank beneath the wave.

The putting this song into Margaret's trembling mouth before she has come into close contact with Faust is a wonderful stroke of art. It is hardly necessary to find any especial significance in the incidents of the song—the indefinable pathos is all that need be regarded, and that is enough. It is the symbol of the golden picture of true love with a black border which should once be suspended in Margaret's own gallery of life.

Opening the press she finds a casket containing chain and earrings. How could they have come there? They are surely not meant for her, and, even if they were, such fine things are only to be worn by those born in a high station. Although with some reluctance, she carries them to her mother, to whom she has always confided her secrets, and in whose judgment she has from early years implicitly believed. The mother sends for a priest to unravel the mystery, who at once proceeds to improve the occasion. In the humorous report of the infuriated Mephistopheles :—

Quoth he :

“ Self-conquest is true victory.

The Church hath a good stomach ; she, with zest,

Hath lands and kingdoms swallowed down, ,

And never yet a surfeit known.

The Church alone, be it confessed,

Daughters, can ill-got wealth digest.”

With that, clasp, chain, and ring, he swept

As they were mushrooms ; and the casket,

Without one word of thanks, he kept,  
As if of nuts it were a basket.  
Promised reward in heaven, then forth he hied—  
And greatly were they edified.—S.

They (or rather the mother), for Gretchen cannot quite reconcile herself to the loss of her trinkets.

Faust is naturally touched by the "darling's" disappointment, and tells his omnipotent comrade to get another choice piece of work from the same source as the last, and let him look sharp about it too.

No milk-and-water devil be,  
And bring fresh jewels instantly.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh, yes, of course.

(*Aside.*)

Your doting love-sick fool, with ease,  
Merely his lady-love to please,  
Sun, moon, and stars in sport would puff away.

The observant reader will note the changing moods of Faust, which will be repeated more than once in this striking love-passage. It might seem to some strange that the Devil should occasionally act as a damper on Faust, and even permit the revival of the more elevated mood, but I take it the Devil knows his own business; and both Faust and Margaret glide along the path he would have them wend, although he keeps a sharp look-out at every turn that they do not slip through his fingers.

As my next lecture must be entirely occupied with tracing their wanderings, I shall not spoil the effect of the narrative as a whole by pursuing it any further to-day. I shall content myself with pointing to the contrast presented in the enamoured pair. Faust is cultured to the highest pitch of his time, Margaret has apparently no acquired powers. Faust is a strange compound, not wholly untrue to life, though also not very common, of eager impulse and excessive reflectiveness. Margaret's feelings flow with an even tenor, and urge her on from deed to deed with a beautiful unconsciousness. Faust is at once the greater and the lower nature, but with the unreconciled tendencies of Idealism and Realism he cannot but pass from one grave blunder to another. He needs a guardian spirit, and there are two competitors for the post—Mephistopheles and Margaret. Which shall gain the victory? The cold calculating spirit of worldly wisdom, or the love, wise without knowing it, of the true woman-heart?



## V.

### GRETCHEN.

THE draught drunk in the Witch's Kitchen has given to Faust for the first time the *heart of youth*. By Mephistopheles' direction the goblet was filled to the brim, by his encouraging command likewise it was drained to the dregs. The Witch had brewed the potion, and it frothed with flame.

Here, then, is no blossoming of Nature's plant in its season, but a wild gourd sprung to maturity in a night; no symmetrical unfolding of manly feelings, but the monstrous growth of passion succeeding the monstrous growth of intellectual curiosity.

There is no occasion with Stahr ("Goethe's *Frauen-gestalten*") to suppose a considerable interval between the emergence from the Kitchen and the encounter with Margaret in the street. Faust's brusque behaviour seems to this writer to bewray a prolonged initiation into vice, but this is surely to misinterpret both Faust and Goethe. Faust's familiarity with the habits of the *roué* (as we shall see) is of later date, and had it

been otherwise these scenes with Margaret would have been quite unintelligible. Nothing can be plainer than that Gretchen is Faust's first love, and although his conversation with Mephistopheles after the brief encounter is frank even to coarseness, experience shows that the collapse of asceticism is only too apt to be followed by licentiousness of thought. We have not to wait long, however, before the lawless mood has passed away, and the soliloquy in Margaret's room, and subsequently in Wood and Cave, show that, while the effects of the Witch's sensual draught have not worn off at the Cathedral door, there is a definite limit to its intoxicating influence.

The part of the poem at which we have now arrived has been styled an episode. It is an episode if we regard Goethe's "Faust" as a new edition of the old legend; anything but an episode, however, if we regard the totality of the poet's work itself. As far as the legend is concerned, we left it on emerging from Auerbach's cellar; we take it up again at the close of the first act of the Second part. In the original narrative there is only a hero, but no heroine; in the modern version there is a heroine, and the story would lose its chief beauty and significance without her. Goethe could only have been indebted in the vaguest possible way to the old book for suggestions at this stage of his work. In one of the early chronicles there is a bare mention of a deserted village maiden,

but no details are furnished. Further, in the original story it was one of the articles of the pact with the Evil One that Faust should never contract a lawful marriage, and there is a visit paid by Faust to the infernal regions which might possibly have suggested the Walpurgis Night, but these hints or resemblances are of the vaguest possible description.

The portions of the Gretchen-tragedy were written at very various times. There is a simple means of separating roughly the older from the later parts of the composition. You will find that sometimes the heroine is styled "Margaret," at other times "Gretchen." Now, wherever Margaret is announced as speaker we have undoubtedly passages belonging to the first period of the author's productivity. And Schröer has made it probable that the composition of the several parts of this episode fell within the following dates:—

1769-1775.—All the scenes before the Monologue in Wood and Cave, the scene in Martha's Garden, and the scenes after the Intermezzo.

1775-1786.—Gretchen at the spinning-wheel, scenes from the Well to the Cathedral.

1786-1788.—Monologue in Wood and Cave.

1797.—Walpurgis Night's Dream.

1800-1801.—Elaboration of the Valentine scene, and the Walpurgis Night.

If this dating be correct, Goethe always intended

that the Gretchen story should be a tragedy, but, while beginning and end were soon clear to him, the intermediate portion was long wanting. And, as the gap was filled up at considerable intervals, we must be prepared for inconsistencies—inconsistencies which the author's distaste for revision prevented him from removing.

As the idealist Faust has his realist attendant in the person of Mephistopheles, so the pure and simple-minded Margaret has her sensuous prompter in the neighbour Martha. The intervention of this woman is necessary in order to procure for the stranger access to the maiden so jealously guarded both by her own innocence and her mother's watchful care.

We are not to be surprised that Margaret should come within the sphere of Dame Schwerdtlein's influence. The poet wants us to see that woman, however ethereal her composition, equally with man has a realistic side, and may have her tempter too in the sphere of sensuous thought and desire. The pious and fearful mother with her lock-and-key policy has just done the very worst thing she could have done for her child's temporal welfare. Strictly excluding her from general society, and allowing her to have no other excitement than that which the incidents of domestic life or the solemn church-services afforded, she had shut off all expression of healthy emotion in any usual way, and had thrown her for sympathy upon the least

spiritual of her acquaintance. The narrow-minded parent, with an eye for externals only, of course saw nothing dangerous in the clever dame whose life was so hard a one through the base desertion of her lawful husband, and Margaret (it seems) was permitted to seek the society of this ill-used, but still flourishing, matron. The inexperienced Margaret, no less than her mother, failed to pierce the outwork of her neighbour's soul; but what was more, although she could not have explained it to herself, was positively *drawn* towards the only one in her small circle who knew how to play upon the instincts of a young girl's heart. What wonder then that, on the discovery of the second casket of jewels placed in her cupboard, she should immediately run over to her neighbour, and inform her of the marvel! It would seem that on the previous occasion she had taken the trinkets first to her mother, and thereafter told her neighbour the strange story; now, she brings the casket at once to the neighbour. No sooner has the breathless girl gasped out her story than Dame Martha remarks:—

You mustn't tell it to your mother!  
'Twould go to the priest, as did the other.

But Gretchen, absorbed in the beauty of the ornaments, hardly seems to hear.

Nay, look at them! now only see!

Whereupon Martha decks her with the jewels, the girl heaving a deep sigh :—

Woe is me !  
Them in the street I cannot wear,  
Or in the church, or anywhere.

The neighbour then suggests that they might perhaps be brought out one by one, so as not to attract attention, and if the mother should say anything, some commonplace story could be easily fabricated. At this point Mephistopheles knocks at the door. With two devils whispering at her ear it will be hard if she comes safe out of the ordeal.

The ostensible object of Mephistopheles seeking Dame Schwerdtlein is to inform her of her runaway husband's death and burial,—the real object is clear, and attained, on its being arranged that the friendly stranger shall bring his travelling companion that very evening to Martha's garden, when the "young lady," as Mephistopheles implies by a seemingly chance question, will be there too.

There is the richest humour in the just-mentioned scene, attaining its culmination when the newly-made widow is so very broad in her attentions to her polite visitor that Mephistopheles finds it needful to put an abrupt end to the interview.

Now to be off in time were best !  
She'd make the very Devil marry her.

Returning to Faust he announces that everything is in excellent train. Dame Schwerdtlein will arrange an interview,—one trifling favour being all that is needed in return, merely a certificate to the effect that Martha's spouse lies in the holy ground of St. Antonio of Padua.

That is a good idea, rejoins Faust, we shall have to take a nice trip of some hundred miles to inspect the spot. Innocent, truly! for what is the need of verification? The *attestation* is all that is necessary. And surely a doctor of philosophy and theology can find nothing difficult in that. How many times has he from the elevation of his professional rostrum,

With front unblushing and a dauntless breast,

made affirmation about what *is* and *must be*, concerning the universe and its creator, without having a whit more solid proof thereof than of Herr Schwerdtlein's death. Faust is still sufficiently clear-sighted to be able to reply—

Thou art and thou remain'st a sophist, liar.

"I suppose," replies his imperturbable companion, "you won't to-morrow, in strict honour of course, swear to the poor Gretchen your whole soul's devotion?" And with my heart too. "And when you speak of eternal fidelity and affection, of one all-absorbing impulse, &c., &c., all that will be equally sincere?" Yes, endless

eternal unchanging love, meaning it too, you poor sceptic devil.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And yet I'm right!

We are now introduced to the evening promenade in the garden. The two couples are alternately presented to view, Margaret leaning on Faust's arm and Mephistopheles escorting Martha. The conversation of the latter pair is of the nature of a fencing-match; the one thrusting dexterously at the heart of her companion, the other parrying the thrust with an ease and finish at once provoking and confounding. Margaret is both flattered and puzzled at being the object of attention of so distinguished a personage as Faust. The self-satisfaction is hardly concealed, but the bewilderment is very obviously betrayed. How can such a man, with his superior connections and social opportunities, care for an insignificant village maiden? But yet there must be a strange exhilaration in this evening's air, for Margaret talks twice as fast as her companion, prattling away quite innocently of the little home-life, with all the family details, and minutely describing her tending of the little sister, who had died, who was the anxious care of her girlhood. Faust asking pardon for his rough address at their first meeting, Margaret explains that it shocked her because it seemed to imply that there was something



immodest in her deportment, otherwise she thought a stranger could not have been so bold; but she confesses to a not wholly unpleasant impression in retrospect. Night coming on, the younger pair, who have thrown off all reserve, and are indulging in some harmless mirth, are rejoined by the elder, and Mephistopheles and Faust take a temporary farewell.

The ice once broken, we are left to suppose that the meetings between the lovers are both frequent and rapturous; but a moment arrives when the significance of the delicious dream is suddenly revealed to Faust. He perceives that he is gradually losing control over himself, feels that his eye is growing dim and his foothold less sure, while the path pursued is becoming narrower, winding ever closer to the edge of a precipice. He hears an inward voice plainly commanding, "Pause!" What shall be done? There is yet time, if he is strong enough! With a heroic effort he resolves to retrace his steps, and taking Margaret home leave her to walk in the old familiar tracks. Accordingly, we next find him rambling by himself in a forest-glade, quite away from the haunts of men, amidst Nature's silent beauties, cooling his heated temples and endeavouring to recover self-possession by serene communion with the genii of woods and waters. Here, in these solitudes, he recognizes the providence of the Earth-Spirit.

---

Not vainly hast thou turn'd  
To me thy countenance in flaming fire.

The Earth-Spirit, he rightly feels, has mysteriously humanized him, has carried him from the dead relics of his dreary library to the springs of life, and opened his heart to glories to which he was before a stranger; but the Earth-Spirit has answered another of his prayers—a more doubtful one perhaps,—

With this exalted joy  
Which lifts me near and nearer to the Gods,  
Thou gav'st me *this companion*, unto whom  
I needs must cling, though cold and insolent,  
He still degrades me to myself.

The beauties of Nature seen through lover's eyes are his, but, as a price of this deeper intuition, he has the perpetual companionship of one who has grown indispensable to him, though while he invites his company, he shudders in his presence. This comrade, who has left him for some little time to himself, is now returning, however, and artfully insinuates that Faust is not yet the man he should be.

In rocky hollows and in caverns drear  
Why like an owl sit moping here?  
Wherefore from dripping stones and moss with ooze imbued  
Dost seek, like any toad, thy food?  
A fine way this thy time to fill,  
The Doctor's in thy body still.

It would be somewhat more unselfish, instead of regaling himself alone, to go and comfort the poor solitary girl who is inconsolable at his absence. The Devil is an exquisite sophist, and Faust knows it. But, as pleasing hint after hint is adroitly thrown in, Faust's heroic resolution gives way. There seems to hang a destiny over him which is not to be resisted, and utterly helpless, though almost distracted with the vague perception of some terrible fate, he exclaims:—

Was't not enough in thy delirious whirl  
To blast the steadfast rocks;  
Her and her peace as well,  
Must I, God-hated one, to ruin hurl?  
Dost claim this holocaust, remorseless Hell?  
Fiend, help me to cut short the hours of dread!  
Let what must happen, happen speedily!  
Her direful doom fall crushing on my head.  
And into ruin let her plunge with me!—S.

Nonsense, returns his cool comrade; be a man; rouse yourself and go on boldly; a life of rapture is before you,—away with all these empty nightmares.

Turning to look at Gretchen, we find the Devil not altogether fabling in his description. Her peace of mind has gone too, but she has no dire forebodings; restless and depressed indeed, a bright glory being suddenly withdrawn; but no awful moral problem troubles her understanding; she only knows one pain,

that of parting—one happiness, to hold him fast in her arms, and die at last in his embrace.

• As “Faust” is a poem written out of the author’s own experience, the critics have naturally been much exercised as to the original of Margaret. In Goethe’s youth and early manhood the names of four women are known to us who might have served as models: Gretchen, his first passionate love at the age of fifteen; Friederike Brion, the daughter of the pastor at Sessenheim, whose acquaintance he made during his residence at Strasburg; Charlotte Buff (the heroine of the “Sufferings of Werther”), whom he knew at Wetzlar, and Elisabeth Schönmann (usually called Lili), who in later years he himself declared to have exercised the most powerful attraction of all. On the strength of this declaration of the poet some have taken it for granted that it is to Lili that we are to look for the feminine graces revealed in Goethe’s typical woman of Goethe’s master-work. It would be more correct to say that in Faust’s *passion* we find the echo of the author’s feeling for Lili rather than in Gretchen the features of Lili herself. I can trace hardly the faintest resemblance to Lili in the heroine of the tragedy of Faust. Of the other three we may however say, that they have all contributed to Margaret’s portrait. The modest, humbly-born, graceful Gretchen of Goethe’s boyish days has furnished both the name and the station in life of the heroine of

"Faust." But she was older than Goethe, and rather reflective, and we must not push the parallel far.<sup>1</sup>

In the cheerful temperament and naïveté of Lotte, with her domestic talents (commemorated in "Werther"), we have the original of much in the character of the Gretchen of our poem. Had Lotte not been already betrothed when Goethe met her, I am not sure that she would not have exercised a deeper sway than Lili, for it is clear that unconscious natures had a magical charm for Goethe. The Gretchen of "Faust" is surely intended for Goethe's ideal woman—no artificial culture, not the slightest want of womanly tact, but at the same time no prudery, a full pure burning heart loving because she must, a total absence of self-consciousness. That is Goethe's real choice. In Lotte we have her, and in Friederike. And with Friederike we have also the last element that is wanted to complete the picture. Goethe's relation to Friederike contributed the black border to

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, however, the heroine of Goethe's tragedy is more indebted to her than the critics have as a rule allowed. When we remember the period of his life when most of the 'Margaret' scenes were composed, and the clear reference to 'Frankfurt in the local scenery, it would only be probable that the Frankfurt maiden should be here immortalized. When, in 1811 (at the age of sixty-two), Goethe jotted down his reminiscences of Gretchen her image was still clear before him, and it is only strange he should have told us nothing of her personal history.

the picture of memory of which I spoke last time. Had Goethe not loved *and left* Friederike of Sessenheim we should probably never have had the tragic story of Faust and Margaret.

But let us return to our narrative. The lovers have met again, and Margaret's peace is restored, with one slight exception. She is in doubt about one point. She has missed in Faust's tone (Heinrich she calls him, not Georg, the name of the historical, nor Johann, that of the legendary, Faust) the respect she has been always accustomed to for the Church's creed and the Church's ordinances. He has never made a definite statement on the subject, but she has a suspicion, which she can no longer conceal, that there is something lacking in this particular direction.

How is it with religion in your mind ?

Faust promptly answers :—

I none would of their faith or Church bereave.

MARGARET.

That's not enough, we must ourselves believe !  
Thou honourest not the sacraments, alas !

FAUST.

I honour them.

MARGARET.

But yet without desire.

(The simple girl cannot understand an attitude of mere tolerance, without strong personal conviction.)

Faust has parried the thrusts hitherto—they have been rather suspicions than direct questions—but Margaret wants something plain, no pretty evasion, and so there comes the downright query :—

Dost thou believe in God ?

Faust is ready even for this assault, however,—

My darling, who dares say,  
Yes, I in God believe ?  
Question or priest or sage, and they  
Seem, in the answer you receive,  
To mock the questioner.

Margaret a little puzzled, but determined not to be baffled, takes this as a negative.

Then thou dost *not* believe ?

Goethe himself had a strong objection to be questioned about these transcendental themes, and Goethe's Faust now speaks in reply in the well-known lines out of the author's soul. In the conversations recorded by Eckermann, we find noted, " We then spoke upon religious subjects, and the abuse of the Divine name. ' People treat it,' said Goethe, ' as if that incomprehensible and most high Being, who is even beyond the reach of thought, were only their equal. Otherwise, they would not say the *Lord God*, the *dear God*, the *good God*. This expression becomes to them, especially to the clergy, who have it daily in their mouths, a mere phrase, a barren name, to which no

thought is attached whatever. If they were impressed by His greatness they would be dumb, and through veneration unwilling to name Him.' ”<sup>1</sup> That is too great a flight, however, for the simple-minded Margaret.

What thus I hear  
Sounds plausible, yet I'm not reconciled ;  
There's something wrong about it ; much I fear  
That thou art not a *Christian*.

A fresh stab for poor Faust. He has only one resource, to smile his gentlest smile, and exclaim, “ My sweet child ! ”

The separation of the transient from the permanent, of the historical form from the unchanging essence, is an act of discrimination beyond the power of the intellectually-undisciplined woman. The shells of belief are only too frequently confounded with the kernels, and if all had the simple trust of Gretchen little harm would result. It is one thing to have an error of the intellect held innocuous in the midst of the stronger growths of the self-renouncing heart, another to have it nestle in the eager mind of the loveless zealot. But Margaret is on less dubious ground when she passes from the theoretical to the practical sphere. Her faith in Heinrich is sufficiently strong to outweigh all the scruples nonconformity with Church creeds and usages would suggest, but she is troubled

<sup>1</sup> December 31, 1823. Translated by Oxenford.



to a degree even Faust's assurances cannot lessen by the repulsion she feels at the sight of his companion. The air of unconcern, the mocking sneer, the ill-concealed malicious twinkle, all reveal a character so antagonistic to the girl's ingenuous nature, that when he is by even Faust's embrace leaves her cold. The conversation is soon after closed, and Mephistopheles with the most beaming smile that has ever rippled his visage greets Faust now alone. His devilish devices have succeeded, the summer glories are well nigh over, and the chilling blasts of winter will soon be there.

As our way now lies along a very gloomy path, let us, before we enter it, cast one look back on the sunny past, and try to fix the Gretchen of the first part of the story in our fancy, before the features have changed. In the simple sketch of her life she tells us that her father had left behind him what (in her innocent estimate) she calls a nice property, namely, a little house and garden outside the town. Her mother and she lived there alone in retirement, doing all the work of the house themselves, more from the mother's frugal tastes than because they could not afford to keep a maid, she adds. She had one brother, who had chosen the profession of a soldier,—a sister had died young. She must occasionally have met the other girls of the place, especially when she went to draw water at the town well, but as a rule her mother rigidly forbade general acquaintances. She had never

been from home, and the chief splendours she had known were the sunrise and the gorgeous services of the cathedral. She had, consciously, no desires that had not been satisfied, living in an Eden where there was no tree of knowledge, no Adam, and no serpent. Faust's arrival put an end to this peaceful existence. He appeared in brilliant trappings enough, with the mixed air of boldness and courtesy of one who seemed to claim homage and receive it as natural right. He seemed to claim Margaret's heart, and without any fiction of reluctance she surrendered it. Why should she hesitate? Why should she be other than her true self? And her true self was to be the simple clinging woman. Natural as it was to her to render filial duty to her mother, equally natural was it to let her heart throb as it would when this noble lover came by and touched its strings so deftly. The only self-consciousness that was aroused was a feeling of wonderment that so superior a being should condescend to concern himself with so ignorant a creature.

Dear God! However is it, such  
A man can think and know so much?  
I stand ashamed and in amaze,  
And answer "Yes" to all he says,  
A poor, unknowing child! And he—  
I can't think what he finds in me!

And the beauty of her nature only shines out the brighter in her oblivion alike of surroundings and

of consequences. The woman's natural charm is spoiled directly the element of prudence comes into play, and the question is asked, "How long am I going to be cared for," and a kind of bargaining commences, "I will give my love on this or that condition, not otherwise." Her lot would possibly have been happier had she done so—certainly would have been more fortunate—but the worldly wisdom needful therefor would have been acquired at the cost of her real self-trust; and though she would certainly never have tasted the dregs of bitterness, it may be questioned if she would have known as exquisite a bliss. Whatever a complete ethics may have to say in the matter, that each deed should be the true expression of actual consciousness is at least the aesthetic ideal of human character, and it is that utter faithfulness to herself, that giving all for love, as if it were the very content of a genuine life, that will always give the Margaret of Goethe's "Faust" a high place in the poetic gallery of Fair Women.

In an angle of the City-wall stands an image of the Mater Dolorosa, or Mother of Sorrows, the Virgin with the sword in her heart,<sup>1</sup> and a maiden with tear-stained visage is putting fresh flowers into the pitcher which stands before it, murmuring—

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 35.

Ah, rich in sorrow, thou,  
Stoop thy maternal brow,  
And mark with pitying eye my misery !  
Ah, wheresoe'er I go,  
With woe, with woe, with woe,  
My anguish'd breast is aching !  
When all alone I creep,  
I weep, I weep, I weep,  
Alas ! my heart is breaking !—S.

We know that anguished countenance—let us pass on to another scene, which cannot be of much later date.

It is a dark night, and a man in the garb of a soldier is approaching the house of Margaret. Certain ugly rumours have been flying about lately, and he has come home to gauge their worth. He has hardly arrived at the street-door when two figures approach, the one of whom with guitar in hand begins to strike up what seems meant for a serenade. Valentine wants no further confirmation. His sword is quickly out of its scabbard, when a few passes suffice for Faust, supported by the Devil's craft, to give a mortal thrust to the brother of his beloved one. The noise has roused the sleepers in the surrounding houses. Martha, Margaret, appear at their windows, and soon a crowd is collected in the street round the dying man—Faust and Méphistopheles having disappeared. A few bitter phrases to Margaret and words of loathing for her neighbour—and all is over.

So the sky is getting more and more lurid. We learn afterwards that an overdose of the sleeping draught (which had been furnished by Faust) administered to her mother has made Margaret an unintentional matricide. What wonder, then, that at the high service of the Cathedral Mass for the souls of the departed, Margaret's thoughts shape themselves into terrible images, and that behind her chair seems stationed a horrible fiend, who pierces the very core of her heart, supplying torments fit for the souls of the damned!

And now the solemn roll of the organ, and the Judgment Chant—the famous *Dies Irae* of the 13th century Thomas of Celano—comes to awe the least concerned of worshippers.<sup>1</sup>

The day of wrath, that awful day  
Shall change the world to ashes.

The wretched Gretchen mutters to herself:—

Would I were hence !  
It is as if the organ  
Choked my breath,  
As if the choir  
Melted my inmost heart !

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of this celebrated hymn and its English renderings, see two articles in the "Dublin Review" (January and April, 1883), entitled "Fifty versions of 'Dies Irae.'"

But still the pitiless chant goes on. Her conscience interprets its sense, though the tongue be foreign.

When the judge shall appear seated on his throne, then nought shall remain unavenged.

The terrified girl feels as if the roof were about to close upon her. "Oh! air, air!" she gasps. The evil spirit whispers:—

Would'st hide thee? Sin and shame  
Remain not hidden!  
Air! light!  
Woe's thee!

And then the chant proceeds:—

What, wretched one, shall I then say?  
Whom of saints shall I implore,  
When even the just are insecure?

The tormenting fiend in her own breast emphasizes the doom:—

The glorified their faces turn  
Away from thee!  
Shudder the pure to reach  
Their hands to thee!

The last words of the chant are being repeated "What, wretched, shall I say?" but it is too much, she cannot bear up longer. Margaret swoons.

The fragment of 1790 ends at this point (although later portions had already been composed). The scene at the Well, at the Shrine, the Valentine scene, the Cathedral scene, must be dated in reference to the story according to the reader's imagination. Evidently there is a considerable interval between the first and second of the scenes just enumerated. The relation of the Valentine scene to its predecessor is a great puzzle. From the agonized cry of the Shrine scene we should infer that Margaret had been already abandoned; but Faust now returns. No reason is given for his departure or his sudden reappearance, and as if no tragedy were on foot he reappears in the character of an amorous serenader, regretting only he has not brought some trinkets for his mistress. How is this to be explained? Doubtless in this way: Goethe was puzzled how to motive Margaret's desertion. He had himself left Friederike of Sessenheim without reason rendered; but, although that might wear a strange air to inquiring friends, there was no constraint to unravel a private psychological mystery. In a drama for the matter-of-fact world, however, reason of some sort, and moreover a cogent one, must be offered. In time he remembered that he had put into the mouth of Margaret the statement of her possessing a brother, a soldier. Why not then motive the desertion by hostile encounter between Faust and this martial relative, in which Valentine

should fall, and thus necessitate Faust's temporary banishment at least? In working out this plan he forgot, however, to unite the scene with its predecessors, and make the whole narrative consistent.

The encounter with Valentine had taken place on the eve of the famous Walpurgis Night, the great meeting-time of the witches, the servants of the Prince of Evil, a festival which Mephistopheles was anxious for Faust to take part in. The more readily therefore was he able to persuade his companion to follow him with the consequences of that fatal encounter threatening the man who had struck the blow. Faust was now wholly in the power of Mephistopheles. He had slain Margaret's brother, hardly knowing what he did; his sense was stunned; the warrant was out for his apprehension; he was for a time a reed which could be shaken by any wind. Mephistopheles seized his opportunity. No time must be given Faust for reflection on the present state of affairs; he must not be allowed to brood over the past or dream about the future; he must be immediately diverted. The wild scene of the Blocksberg on the night of the 30th of April was the very place for forgetting the world of human care and duty, for confusing the healthy sense and common understanding, and for the noblest mind to be utterly demoralized.

Boniface, a Christian monk born in Devonshire in



680, left this country in the early part of the eighth century to convert the then heathen provinces of Central Germany to the Christian faith. Having been created metropolitan of all the dioceses of the right bank of the Rhine, he sent over to his native country for zealous members of the Church to aid him in his labours. Several accepted the call, and a nun among them named Walpurgis was established as abbess at the Convent of Heidenheim in Franconia. After her death she was rewarded for her devotion by being enrolled as a saint, and having the first of May assigned to her in the calendar. Now it so happened that this day was the great festal day of the heathen Druids; the conflict of the two religions was thus carried over into the spirit-world. As the gods of older faiths always became devils to the devotees of the newer, Walpurgis became the protecting saint against devils and devils' servants (or witches), and on the first of May the custom is still preserved of lighting fires to terrify the diabolic ministrants from performing their dark rites. The Walpurgis Night is the great witch-night of the year, and the rendezvous is that picturesque group of mountains which occupy an extensive district of Central Germany, between the rivers Leine and Elbe. The loftiest member of the group is the Brocken, and on its summit Satan was believed to hold his high court. It is to this place that Faust is to be led by Mephistopheles, and,

though it forms only an episode in the poem, there is no scene more striking or weird in the whole drama.<sup>1</sup>

Faust and Mephistopheles are first shown us struggling with difficulty up the sides of the mountain. The moon is scarcely visible, and the scenery is but dimly discernible in the uncertain light. But what is visible is fantastic enough—a labyrinth of valleys interspersed with abruptly-rising rocks, over whose sides at intervals dart foaming waterfalls. There are also forests of birch and gloomy fir-trees. This night the wind is howling through the trees, and Faust, as they ascend higher and higher, finds it hard work to hold his ground. In the scarcely-lifted gloom they pick their way with difficulty until Mephistopheles hails a nimble Will-o'-the-wisp as proper guide to the place of the witches' revel. Mephistopheles' speech to Faust will give the best insight into the bewildering scene:—

Hark ! Through the woods the tempests roar !  
The owlets flit in wild affright.  
Split are the columns that upbore  
The leafy palace, green for aye :  
The shivered branches whirr and sigh,  
Yawn the huge trunks with mighty groan,  
The foots, upriven, creak and moan !  
In fearful and entangled fall,  
One crashing ruin whelms them all,

<sup>1</sup> It struck the fancy of Shelley, who translated it entire in 1822—it and the "Prologue in Heaven."

While through the desolate abyss,  
Sweeping the wreck-strewn precipice,  
The raging storm-blasts howl and hiss !  
Hear'st thou voices sounding clear,  
Distant now and now more near ?  
Hark ! the mountain ridge along,  
Streameth a raving magic-song !—S.

It is the train of witches, a few sweeping on fast ahead of all the rest, the majority keeping a good steady pace, and a considerable number down below struggling in vain to keep up with the main body, and shouting to the van to halt for them. But none will pause. On, on the stream flows, wildly struggling, singing in chorus songs of spiteful malice or of disgusting allusion. Once Faust gets hurled asunder from his companion, but not for long—Mephistopheles does not choose to leave him alone. And now the witches are settling down, kindling the fires which begin to light up with a strong glare the whole mountain-range. It seems to Faust like a mad fair, and in utter bewilderment he cries, “Pray heaven I keep my senses here.”

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Upward the eddying concourse throng,  
Thinking to push thyself art push'd along.

They see Lilith, Adam's first wife according to Rabbinical tradition, the entangler of incautious youth, whose enticing lips are tinged with mortal poison. Though Mephistopheles keeps Faust clear of her,

the view has evidently bewitched him ; for, on the former proposing to join one of the gay groups, Faust immediately assents, taking the hand of a fair young witch, while Mephistopheles seizes an older partner. As they dance, keeping time to a song, they are accosted by one who calls out :—

Accursed mob ! How dare ye thus to meet ?  
Have I not shown and demonstrated too,  
That ghosts stand not on ordinary feet ?  
Yet here ye dance, as other mortals do !

The dance, however, continues, increasing the wrath of the philosopher.

Still here ! what arrogance ! unheard-of quite !  
Vanish ! we now have fill'd the world with light !  
How long at this conceit I've swept with all my might,  
Lost is the labour : 'tis unheard-of quite !

This is a hit at one of the high-priests of critical enlightenment, Friedrich Nicolai, who was the dire foe of all transcendentalism, whether in poetry or speculation. Carlyle says :—"To the very last Nicolai could never persuade himself that there was anything in heaven or earth that was not dreamt of in *his* philosophy." He was overtaken by a really curious Nemesis, being troubled by phantasmal shapes, which had the impudence to skip before his view in broad daylight. The application of leeches at last removed the unceremonious visitors—but it was an odd retribution !

Faust suddenly leaves his fair companion, and to the wondering question of Mephistopheles declares :—

Ah, in the very middle of her song  
Out of her mouth a small red mouse there sprung.

The incident is borrowed from an old legend, which it is unnecessary to quote here. As *symbol*, it is sufficiently plain. It was not likely a young “witch” would fail to show traces of her real nature if one only danced long enough with her. But this was not all that took away Faust’s appetite for festive gaities.

Mephisto, seest thou there  
Standing far off a lone child pale and fair?  
Slow from the spot her drooping form she tears  
And seems with shackled feet to move along;  
I own, within me the delusion’s strong,  
That she the likeness of my Gretchen wears.

It is only a phantom—no need to look at it. But it rivets Faust’s glance.

What bliss! what torture! vainly I essay  
To turn me from that piteous look away.  
How strangely doth a single crimson line  
Around that lovely neck its coil entwine,  
It shows no broader than a knife’s blunt edge!

With a joke Mephistopheles drags him forcibly away. Come up to that theatre yonder; why, you are always living in dreamland; they say there is a brand-new play to be produced, written by a dilettante, to be performed by dilettanti. And then follows what

I take to be the piece, entitled "The Golden Wedding of Oberon and Titania," performed in the open air without any stage accessories, the performers being the representatives of certain intellectual phases of the day—some of the personages being no longer clearly identifiable by us, but even when obvious, naturally losing their interest through the changed circumstances of the times.

And now what are we to say about this whole strange phantasmagoria? Well, its broad purpose is sufficiently clear. Faust has had his pleasure, and has had too the dire necessity thrust upon him, as consequence, of laying low the nearest in blood to the beloved one herself. He must perforce abandon her now, and, that the memory of the recent deed be obliterated, must plunge into the world, must drown all painful recollections in the wildest excitement. In that world where nothing is seen aright, in the conclave of perverted minds, corrupted natures, enticing sirens, illuminated only by the half-light of sophistry and self-pleasure,—that is the place whither Faust's baser self hurries him, and where he will try to drink a deep draught of the waters of Lethe.

And for a season the attempt is successful. He plunges into the wildest debauchery, takes part in all spiritual and material dissipations, draws a veil over the past, and lives only in the frail pleasures of the present hour.

But a moment comes, in the midst of his revel, when a still small voice startles him, and there rises up before his imagination the form of one deserted without a word, possibly abandoned to ignominy and despair. It is only for a moment, however, for the light-hearted comrades laugh him out of his fears and drag him back to their world of unsatisfying illusion again.

Goethe could write a portion of this too out of his own experience. There was a time as we know (from one of his own letters)—it was the first days in Weimar—when there was a possibility of his making utter shipwreck. It was a mad reckless life, he tells us, and a less strong head than Goethe's might have succumbed, but he emerged in time from the intoxicating revel, and collected himself for the serious labour of a long arduous life.

The author intended to mediate the transition from the Intermezzo to the next stage of the story by another Brocken scene. He has left some fragments to that effect, but it is not wonderful he rejected them,—they would not have bridged the chasm. A time must be supposed to elapse, how long we do not know. Nor do we know the antecedents of the following scene: but a report has reached Faust . . . he is crossing a plain with Mephistopheles on a dreary day. It is the only scene in the whole work written in prose, written it is said at a single sitting,

terrible like the sudden thunder-burst of an unlooked-for storm.

*Faust.* In misery! Despairing! Long a wretched wanderer upon the earth, and now a prisoner! The dear, unhappy being, cooped up in the dungeon, as a malefactor, for horrid tortures! Even to that! to that! Treacherous, worthless spirit, and this hast thou concealed from me! Stand, only stand! roll thy devilish eyes infuriated in thy head! Stand and brave me with thy unbearable presence! A prisoner! In irremediable misery! Given over to evil spirits, and to sentence-passing, unfeeling man! And me, in the meantime, hast thou been lulling with tasteless dissipations, concealing her growing wretchedness from me, and leaving her to perish without help.

*Mephistopheles.* She is not the first.

*Faust.* Dog! horrible monster!—Turn him, thou Infinite Spirit! turn the reptile back again into his dog's shape, in which he was often pleased to trot before me by night, to roll before the feet of the harmless wanderer, and fasten on his shoulders when he fell. Turn him again into his favourite shape, that he may crouch on his belly before me in the sand, whilst I spurn him with my foot, the reprobate! Not the first! Woe! Woe! It is inconceivable by any human soul, that more than one creature should have sunk into such a depth of misery,—that the first, in its writhing death-agony, was not sufficient to atone for the guilt of all the rest in the sight of the Ever-pardoning. It harrows up my marrow and my very life,—the misery of this one: thou art grinning away calmly at the fate of thousands.

*Mephistopheles.* Now we are already at our wits' end again! just where the sense of you mortals snaps with overstraining. Why dost thou enter into fellowship with us, if thou canst not go through with it? Will'st fly, and are not safe from dizziness? Did we force ourselves on thee, or thou thyself on us?

*Faust.* Gnash not thy greedy teeth thus defyingly at me! I loathe thee! Great, glorious Spirit, thou who deignedst to



appear to me, thou who knowest my heart and my soul, why yoke me to this shame-fellow, who feeds on mischief, and battens on destruction !

*Mephistopheles.* Hast done ?

*Faust.* Save her ! or woe to thee ! The most horrible curse on thee for thousands of years !

*Mephistopheles.* I cannot loosen the shackles of the avenger, nor undo his bolts.—Save her !—Who was it that plunged her into ruin ? I, or thou ? [*Faust looks wildly around.*] Art thou grasping after the thunder ? Well that it is not given to you wretched mortals ! To dash to pieces one who replies to you in all innocence—that is just the tyrant's way of venting himself in perplexities.

*Faust.* Bring me thither ! She shall be free !

*Mephistopheles.* And the danger to which you expose yourself ? Know, the guilt of blood, from your hand, still lies upon the town. Avenging spirits hover over the place of the slain, and lie in wait for the returning murderer.

*Faust.* That, too, from thee ? Murder and death of a world upon thee, monster ! Conduct me thither, I say, and free her !

*Mephistopheles.* I will conduct thee, and what I can, hear ! Have I all power in heaven and upon earth ? I will cloud the gaoler's senses ; do you possess yourself of the keys, and bear her off with human hand. I will watch ! The magic horses will be ready : I will bear you off. This much I can do.

*Faust.* Up and away ! <sup>1</sup>

Who comes off best in this scene, Faust or Mephistopheles ? I think there will be little difference of opinion. The Devil is in the right, the man is in the wrong. The man has done the deed, and will not see its inevitable sequel. The Spirit of Evil has only

<sup>1</sup> Hayward's translation.

made opportunities, has only given the opening for crime and ruin, and here the agent is complaining that he has been kept in ignorance, and is raving at his hard fate, because matters have had their natural development. As if he had anything to blame but his own thoughtlessness ! Of course Margaret would enjoy herself while he was dancing with fair witches on the turf of the Brocken ! What need to hurry ? A little needful diversion, and he would write or go back, and find all things precisely as they used to be ! And then the comrade who has helped to the delights he did not refuse to enjoy when the chance was offered—this is the real offender, and the one to be dashed to atoms, and the noble-minded Faust go scot-free ! But this spurned comrade will strive to do the best he can. It is not much. He cannot directly act ; he can again afford *opportunity*—an opportunity which Faust himself must grasp. It must always be Faust's own *will* which shall effect the deed ; Mephistopheles is his servant, not his substitute.

And now the next short incomparable scene. Night. Open country. Faust and Mephistopheles on coal-black horses, dashing along at full speed. There is not an hour to lose. As they swiftly pass Faust catches a glimpse of strange figures, barely visible in the dim light, hovering round a place of execution. The scene is scarcely five lines, no more.

FAUST.

What weave they yonder round the Raven-Stone?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I know not what they shape and brew.

FAUST.

They're soaring, swooping, bending, stooping.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A witch's pack.

FAUST.

They charm, they strew.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

On! on!

"On" hurries the wretched Faust, his conscience thoroughly alive again, his feelings intenser than they ever were, his reason wholly absorbed with one single thought; on to the *prison* where the gentle-hearted, absolutely-trusting maiden nestles on her pallet of straw, with the cruel fetters pressing her wrist and ankles.

It is deep night—absolute silence reigns outside the dungeon-walls. In one of the corridors a man pauses at a small iron door, holding a lamp and keys. He hesitates a moment, seeming to have insufficient strength even to unlock the door. But it is only for a moment, for time is precious. But while he is finding the lock a song is heard which thrills him through

and through. The door is opened, and the hardly recognizable form is seen cowering on her pallet. She starts as he enters, and, scarcely looking up, utters a piteous cry. She thinks it is the headsman come to fetch her, and now, throwing herself before him on her knees, she begs for a brief respite:—

I am yet so young, so young—  
I now am at thy mercy quite.

Faust cannot bear it, he flings himself on the ground beside her:—

A lover at thy feet bends low.

But he is not recognized. She thinks he kneels to pray with her. She sees the flame of hell rising through the floor, and hears the howl of demons. It is in vain to try and fix her eye, in vain to whisper in her ear. Faust cries aloud, “Gretchen, Gretchen.” The maiden springs to her feet, and the already unlocked chain drops off, as she delightedly exclaims:—

That was my loved one's voice!  
Where is he? I heard him calling me.

FAUST.

'Tis I!

MARGARET (*embracing him*).

'Tis he! . . . .

To save me thou art come!  
And I am saved!

(And she recalls to his mind the street where their eyes first met, and the pleasant garden where she and Martha awaited his coming.) Faust would lead her at once away, but she is so rejoiced to find him again that her mind cannot find room for other thought. And then in the midst of her rapture a cloud passes over her countenance. How is this? He does not offer to kiss her. Well, then she must be the first. But, ah!—

Woe! woe! thy lips are cold—

(As the first perplexity returns)

And art thou he? And art thou he?

Oh, yes! it is he beyond a doubt, but no time for love's expression now—first out of the gloomy gates, and then caresses without end.

The recently kindled joy is gone. Note the fresh turn. We just had the rapture of newly-risen hope—now the gloom of dense despair, as memory passes on beyond the Garden scene to the later story.

Here it drops out bit by bit, coldly, each word a sentence of irrevocable doom, the clear, stern, unalterable fact.

I sent my mother to her grave,  
I drowned my child beneath the wave.  
Give me thy hand! It is no dream! 'Tis true!  
Thine own dear hand!—But how is this? 'Tis wet!  
Quick, wipe it off! Meseems that yet

There's blood thereon.  
 Ah, God! what hast thou done?  
 Put up thy sword,  
 I beg of thee!

FAUST.

If thou dost feel 'tis I, then come with me!

MARGARET.

What—thou'rt leaving me?  
 Oh, Heinrich! would that I could go with thee!—S.

And then her fancy reverts to the despairing flight from her ruined home, and, recalling the scene, she calls to him, the natural friend who of course is with her,—there over the bridge where the plank is, where there is a ripple in the water, a struggle,—

Save it! Oh, save!

Faust is getting desperate. A few more minutes of this lingering, and it would be all too late. He tries to bear her off by main force. But she will not permit that. She has always followed him reluctantly, though hitherto unhesitatingly.

Day dawns! My love! My love!

MARGARET.

(Now in a new and quite hollow tone.)

Yes! day draws near,  
 The day of judgment too will soon appear!  
 It should have been my bridal! . . . . .  
 Though not at the dance—  
 We shall meet once more!

(And then in sharp, telling sentences, every word a picture, the scene of the inevitable earthly morn is described.)

The crowd doth gather, in silence it rolls ;  
The squares, the streets,  
Scarce hold the throng.  
The staff is broken,—the death-bell tolls,—  
They bind and seize me ! I'm hurried along,  
To the seat of blood already I'm bound !  
Quivers each neck as the naked steel  
Quivers on mine the blow to deal—  
The silence of the grave now broods around !—S.

Little wonder that Faust bursts out with a piercing cry :—

Would I had ne'er been born !

His prayer to the Earth-Spirit has surely been answered now ; his wish expressed to the deprecating fiend has been gratified—the total woe of humanity has been felt at last. The calm Being was right which answered :—

Thou'rt like the spirit thou dost comprehend,  
Not me !

It is not the sublime Earth-Spirit, however, but the cool indifferent comrade who now appears at the door, urging to instant departure.

A glance at him and the mood of the distracted woman's mind changes for the last time. The dungeon walls are already melting into air in her fancy. This is not a prison,—it is a temple !

What would he in this holy place ?

Judgment of God ! To thee my soul I give !

The gates of Heaven roll back, and she sees the hosts of the glorified and redeemed descending to guard her from this last assault of the Evil One. The saddest and bitterest word of all escapes her lips :—

Heinrich ! I shudder now to look on thee !

Mephistopheles cries, “She is judged !” A voice from above gives back the answer audible to his ear alone :—

Is saved !

Mephistopheles hurries Faust away, and a voice, so infinitely piteous in its pleading, is heard growing fainter and fainter by the departing man, “Heinrich ! Heinrich !”

“Faust” is called a Tragedy in Two parts, but is a tragedy only in one, and that tragedy is not a “Faust” but a “Gretchen” tragedy. There is only one sacrifice, and that not the hero’s. There is pain and experience for him in fullest measure, but the victim laid on the altar is the innocent woman, not the erring man.

The Tragedy is the highest form of human art, and it acquires this distinction because it is the poetic statement of the darkest problem that can trouble the human mind. No amount of analysis or subtle argument will make the moral world of man in certain of its phases other than an impenetrable



mystery. It is beyond a doubt true that the innocent often suffer for the guilty, beyond a doubt true that the worst pangs are reserved for those who (as we say) least deserve them. When alluding to pessimism in my last lecture, I parenthetically warned you that I was only dealing with one aspect of it;—here is the other and the unassailable side—*the highest moment attained by man is the hour of intensest pain, and a crown of thorns is the meed for the divinest brow.* Try carefully as we will to find dark spots in Margaret's character, at the worst they were trifling errors compared with the innumerable wrongs which pass with the meagrest punishment. What did the inexperienced girl know of the fruits of a love which was all love, and had no side-glances for profit and loss? Even the acceptance of the phial (perhaps her greatest fault) was surely so sweetly natural—the draught was warranted strictly innocent, and who in the world could possibly be harmed?

Turning, however, to our story and the poet's intention therein, we see (neglecting the insoluble element of the problem) how he would indicate to us the need of mutual support for working out the life-problem. It has been decreed in the destiny that formed them and brought them together that these two, Faust and Margaret, are essentially necessary to each other; that for Margaret there is no growth, without Faust, for Faust no salvation without Mar-

garet. If the poet says anything plainly it is this—here are two natures which are to be brought out of their torpor through suffering; there is but one possibility for Faust's unfolding—to pass through every form of human experience till he comes out of the fire refined gold. And the only power that can sustain him in the trial is an absolutely unselfish love, and if that talisman be not found he is eternally lost. And for Margaret there is an alternative equally certain, though not apprehended by the reason, only felt with the heart—either to crush the impulses which draw her to this broader nature who comes within her sphere, to have the wedding wreath and spend her life in some small circle of village routine, ending, as her mother does, with little narrow ideas and the unreflecting Church piety, or to follow where love beckons, and wear, not the myrtle wreath, but the black cap of the infanticide. Not her conscious will, but her unconscious feeling, chose the latter course, and we have seen the close of one-half of our life-drama. Margaret is already at the journey's end. Although with less effort, she has reached heaven before Faust. She had *one* moment of deliberate choice, but *only* one, and that tremendous, one great temptation which she successfully passed through—the temptation to leave her prison, obliterate her early past, and resume the old life with her lover. She was firm there, and thereby saved both herself and Faust.

Had she been faithless to her best nature at that moment, had the pleasures of liberty and love captivated her, then we know what would have been the sequel—the deepest element of her character would have been undermined, for what would any enjoyment have been worth with the agonized memories of the dreadful past?

One or two observations more before we proceed further. It is interesting to know that one of the fifty-six propositions which Goethe proposed for disputation at his doctor's degree in 1771 ran, "*An foemina partum recenter editum trucidans capite plectenda sit?*" "Ought a child-murderess to be punished with death?" An infanticide (unintended) forms likewise the critical point of the "*Wahlverwandtschaften*." He evidently felt it a great tragic motive. I would have you to observe too the artistic treatment in the working out of Margaret's doom. In the scene at the Well (a scene which I did not describe) we have the world's judgment on Margaret suggested—the unfeeling tone, not without a tinge of envy, of conventional society. In the Cathedral scene the stern unbending sentence of the orthodox religious world, of the self-righteous saint. In the last scene of all, the still small whisper from the High Throne, above the harshness of arrogant human virtue and ecclesiastical pride—the word of mercy and full pardon.

Margaret is then saved. But Faust? He is so far from being saved that he is at this moment in the Devil's keeping. The woman has atoned for her errors—and a bitter atonement enough—her body will be laid in a criminal's grave—but for Faust, the man, there is still one way of atonement, and that is given in the sentence of Jean Paul Richter, "The only repentance open to thee is *a better deed.*"

## VI.

### FAUST ENTERS THE GREAT WORLD.

FAUST'S transition to the new life is symbolized by a scene of exquisite beauty and significance. He is discovered by us tossing on a bed of flowery turf in a beautiful region now veiled in darkness. A number of elves hover around him of whose presence he is not aware, and their leader bids them sing the weary man sweetly to refreshing and all-forgetting slumber.

We are to understand by this that Faust has been utterly unhinged by the terrible experiences he has undergone, that he has not yet found balm for his deep wounds, that his soul is dark, and that, though beauties are strewn around him, he has lost the power to view them. But this funeral pall has rested long enough upon his spirit, his remorse has been sufficiently keen and bitter, the spirit of mercy will now permit the wearied one to sleep, and then arouse him with words of cheer to the new life of hope and worthy action.

The four vigils of the night, which are now to be celebrated by the song of the elfin choir, mark the

progressive stages of the hapless man's return to inward harmony. As twilight steals on, his pillow shall first be smoothed, then with darkening night the hour of profound slumber arrives. And as the middle watch is passed, and the stars begin to fade, the song changes to a fair promise, and last the sun's reflection ere the orb surmounts the horizon presages the coming day of activity and noble effort.

When around the green-girt meadow  
Balm the tepid winds exhale,  
Then in fragrance and in shadow  
Twilight spreads her misty veil  
Whispers peace in accents cheery,  
Rocks the heart in childhood's play,  
And upon these eyelids weary  
Shuts the golden gates of Day

Now the Night already darkles,  
Holy star succeeds to star;  
Dazzling light and fainter sparkles  
Glimmer near and gleam afar  
Glimmer here, the lake reflecting,  
Gleam in cloudless dark aboon,  
While, the bliss of rest protecting,  
Reigns in pomp the perfect moon.

Now the Hours are cancelled for thee,  
Pain and bliss have fled away:  
Thou art whole, let faith restore thee!  
Trust the new, the rising Day!  
Vales grow green, and hills are lifting  
Through the shadow-rest of morn;

And in waves of silver, drifting  
On to harvest, rolls the corn.

Wouldst thou with desires unbounded,  
Yonder see the glory burn !  
Lightly is thy life surrounded—  
Sleep's a shell, to break and spurn !  
When the crowd sways, unbelieving,  
Show the daring will that warms !  
He is crowned with all achieving,  
Who perceives and then performs.—T.

The night is over, the day has come. A truce to sorrow and vain regret ! The irreparable Past shall henceforth be remembered only in the indefinable tenderness with which each new revelation of the Beautiful is welcomed, in the intelligent sympathy which lightens the woes of others. As Goethe elsewhere says :—

Impatience is no source of ease,  
Still less is rue ;  
That doth old guilt increase,  
This bringeth new.

The sun rises announced by the trumpets of the dawn, and as the light spreads quickly over the dormant earth the pulses of life begin to beat again, the dewdrops glisten on the leaves, and the snow-clad mountains gleam with a blinding whiteness. The sighed-for rest has done its office,—the wanderer stands up with no sense of numbness in his limbs, thrilled by the glories of wakening Nature, ready for

a career of serious toil. Not a word escapes him of the long black night, it seems as if it never had been, as if for the first time he now looked upon the fair world, unless indeed the overpowering brilliancy be a reminder that his eye has too long been irresponsible to the light. The fire-sea without, significant of love, hate, joy, or pain, is so dazzling that it threatens to blind him. It is too soon to look upon that resplendent orb. The heavenly glories are not yet to be beheld by Faust in their total beauty, as little as once the dread countenance of the Spirit of Earth. He turns himself quickly round, and views the dashing waterfall in its stead—there in the refracted beam he may feast his eye upon the image of that glory, and bear it in his heart as a symbol of the lot of broken and changeful mortality.

As regards the pictorial colouring of this proclodium a note by Eckermann in his Diary is interesting. Goethe had been speaking of a visit to Switzerland in 1797. "I remarked that it appeared to me as if the splendid description of sunrise in the first scene of the second part of 'Faust,' written in *terza rima*, was founded upon the recalled impressions of the lake of the four cantons.

'I will not deny,' said Goethe, 'that these contemplations proceed from that source; nay, without the fresh impressions of those wonderful scenes, I could never have conceived the subject of the *terza rima*.



But that is all which I have coined from the gold of my Tell-localities. The rest I left to Schiller, who, as we know, made the more beautiful use of it.'"<sup>1</sup>

Between the close of the First Part and the second scene of the Second Part years must be supposed to elapse, years of which the above short scene is the condensed but significant reminder.

The young Emperor of Germany has just returned from his solemn coronation by the Pope at Rome, and the state-councillors are assembled to welcome him in the large hall of the palace. With a flourish of trumpets, attended by a splendid retinue, the emperor enters and ascends the throne. All the superior court officials are now present, including the very wisest, the reader of the secrets of destiny, the astrologer, at the ruler's right hand. But where is the counterpoise, the trusty attendant whose place is reserved on the left, the equally indispensable fool? Tumbled down in a drunken fit. But a successor has not long to be waited for. In a twinkling, in lieu of the old corpulent zany, a lath of a jester is kneeling at the emperor's feet, offering a specimen of fool's wit, the answer to which I follow Hartung in taking to be "genius."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This and subsequent citations from Eckermann's "Conversations" are all from Oxenford's translation.

<sup>2</sup> At least, so I understand him. He calls attention to the resemblance to Schiller's "Riddle of Genius." ("Ungelehrte Erklärung des Goethe'schen Faust," 1855.)

The new fool is the spirit of contradiction, the propounder of double-edged riddles. He has come as the forerunner of his master, an unwilling visitor, whose approach the enigma mysteriously declares.

The youthful emperor, returned from a long and fatiguing journey, would gladly at once inaugurate the revels which formed the traditional sequel of the coronation ceremony, but the great councillors of state have very long faces, and must first pour out their grievances. The chancellor, who is also archbishop of Mainz, complains that justice is perverted; the field-marshal, that the soldiers can no longer be kept within the bounds of discipline; the treasurer, that there is no more gold in the imperial chest; the steward that the court retainers have eaten and drunken the resources of the royal household. The emperor turns to his new fool, and asks if he is not going to swell the chorus of lamentation. On the contrary, Mephistopheles can find no lack of splendour or sufficiency where the sun of majesty shines. But as it is not a perfectly constructed world, there must always be some trifling want, and the present desideratum (he remarks in a light tone) seems to be *money*. And the gold is there if anyone could only tell how to get at it—treasures in the earth buried by the old Romans—and as the land belongs to Cæsar's heir, the treasure is also Cæsar's. Ask the wise man, the astrologer. The astrologer, then,

prompted by Mephistopheles, declares what has just been said to be true, and, moreover, that the hour is propitious for raising the treasure. To work then at once, exclaims the emperor. First the carnival, is the reply of Mephistopheles through the mouth of the astrologer. Assent is readily enough given, the intention of Mephistopheles and the astrologer being evidently to gain time for a project, the nature of which the sequel will show.

Mephistopheles' comment appropriately terminates a very amusing scene, full of life and movement.

How closely linked success and merit  
Doth never to these fools occur,  
Had they the philosopher's stone, I swear it,  
The stone would lack the philosopher.

In Eckermann's "Conversations," under the date October 1, 1827, we find the note:—"At the theatre, 'Das Bild,' by Honwald. I saw two acts, and then went to Goethe, who read to me the second scene of his new 'Faust.' . . . Goethe read the scene and the interspersed murmuring of the crowd excellently, and I had a very pleasant evening."

We really owe to Eckermann the second part of "Faust" in its present complete form. The idea of a continuation of the first part occurred as early as 1775, and a few scenes were composed within the next fifty years; but the composition of the second part as an

organic whole dates only from August, 1824, and occupied the last seven years of the author's life. We find in Goethe's private journal, under the same date as Eckermann's note above quoted, the remark:—"Dr. Eckermann—Read to him the second scene [of 'Faust'] and discussed the whole;"<sup>1</sup> and it is evident from the journalistic notes of '26, '27, '30, and '31,<sup>1</sup> that Eckermann was constituted by Goethe his trusty adviser as regards this second part.

The idea of the second scene of the first act (counting the introduction as the first) was derived from a poem by Hans Sachs, in which an itinerant alchemist is described as forcing his way into the presence of the emperor and his council, and offering for a consideration to refill the exhausted treasury by transmuting the baser metals into gold.

Scene 3. "A spacious hall, with adjoining apartments, arranged and decorated for a masquerade."

The Carnival Masquerade, like much else in the second part of "Faust," has a double purpose—an obvious one lying on the surface, serving to advance the story, the other a deeper one, relating to Faust's inward experience. The immediate object of the scene before us is to give Faust an important place at the imperial court; the significance of the incidents is to

<sup>1</sup> Privately communicated to Von Loeper by Biedermann. See L.'s "Faust." Zweite Bearbeitung. Zweiter Theil, 1879, p. iv.

be found in regarding the whole as a moving panorama of the world in which the hero of humanity is for the future to play his part. It was impossible for Goethe to represent by *events* the full history of Faust. He could only select a few striking life-passages, and leave the rest in shadow. But he thought it advisable to indicate at the beginning of this wider experience the varied scene into which the hero was about to plunge.

The little world and then the great we'll see, ~

Mephistopheles had proposed. The little world *has* been viewed—the world of humble life, of private joy and grief. Until that little world had been explored, it was useless to attempt the survey of the vaster field. But the day of larger aims must at last arrive for Faust, for only through the process of discipline in that wider world can his powers be fully unfolded. The Masquerade then, while a needful link in the outer history, serves the purpose of being a suggestion to the reader that the world in all its variety is to be the theatre of Faust's future action.

A herald acts the part of a Greek chorus in the scene, now announcing, now describing the various masks as they pass over the stage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Entertainments of this sort possessed a great interest for Goethe. He introduced and repeatedly superintended them at the ducal court at Weimar. In a masquerade of the 16th of

First enter garden-girls bringing in various flowers, to indicate the world's opening golden age, when Nature's beauty was still unspoilt, and mankind lived without care and toil. The gardeners who succeed represent the first though slight departure from Nature's primal beauty. They bring fruit, not flowers, something more solid than poetic roses, and pleasantly remind their fair predecessors that if we would not be deceived by outward show we must taste the offerings before we can pronounce upon their quality. The two choruses mingle and jointly offer their wares to the spectators, when, as a sign that the world is growing older, a mother and a daughter appear, who clearly indicate that the naïve loves of Eden are over, that maternal schemings and maidenly wiles are necessary if marriages are to be made in the future. The hunting state of early society is then indicated by the appearance of fishers and bird-catchers. Then appear representatives of the first rough drudgery of the world. The clearers of woods and forests make their appearance, tumbling in with rustic clumsiness.

February, 1781, Goethe himself took part in the procession, appearing in the character of Sleep, announcing himself in lines commencing—

Ein treuer Freund,  
Der allen frommt,  
Gerufen oder nicht,  
Er kommt, u. s. w.

But the agricultural state and subsequent city life allows of a leisured class who profit by the severer labours of their fellows, the lazy dogs, the parasites, and the licentious. And now art and refinement make their appearance. Poets of all descriptions come on the stage, each eager to monopolize the attention of the world. They pass over, and then (suggested by Greek art) appear the Graces, the Fates, and the Furies, the attendants of common life—the Graces exhorting to politeness and courtesy, the Parcae stating the conditions of well-regulated existence, and the Furies representing the ruinous effect of ill-assorted unions and the spirit of calumny and revenge.

The general social masks have passed, and now the political ones make their appearance. An elephant splendidly caparisoned comes slowly on the stage, a delicately-made woman seated on its neck adroitly guiding the huge beast; a magnificent form stands on the back, and two women accompany the animal, one on each side, with fetters on their wrists. This is the strong surely-based State, guided dexterously by the correct tact of Prudence, while Hope and Fear, or rash Reform and timid Conservatism, are duly held in check. At the heels of the live colossus, bearing the splendid Victoria on its back, the concentrated essence of political wisdom, appears a malignant dwarf, whose name is compounded of two

famous detractors of genuine greatness, one Zoilus, a critic of the third century B.C., who rendered himself famous by a depreciatory criticism of Homer, and Thersites, the railer of the *Iliad*. This fellow announces it as his mission to mar the harmony of the state, to dethrone the truly great and exalt the intrinsically mean, to call the bent the straight and the straight the perverted. The herald gives the rascal a blow with his baton, and the figure splits in twain—one part appearing as an adder creeping in the dust, the other as a bat, which at once seeks out the dark corners of the ceiling. These cynical vipers and blind critical bats having roused the disgust of the crowd, the unpleasant impression is removed by a beautiful but magical exhibition.<sup>1</sup>

A chariot drawn by four dragons comes rushing through the air, over the heads of the spectators, surrounded by coloured lights, and guided by a youth of striking beauty, with flowing locks and graceful robe. Seated behind him on a throne is a man with a fine commanding countenance, wearing a rich turban. From the hinder part of the chariot dangle the long

<sup>1</sup> Both the approaching pageant and the figure of Zoilo-Thersites are interruptions of the masquerade as pre-arranged by the court officials, as is evident from the uncanny feeling that creeps over the herald as he sees the unexpected effect of the blow sustained by the dwarf, and his inability to pierce the disguises of the personages that now make their appearance.



legs of a seeming Merry Andrew, who is seated on a chest. The boy-charioteer commands "Halt," and bids the herald describe the party. The herald does his best, but cannot penetrate the masks. The charioteer then declares that the man on the throne is Plutus, the God of Wealth, and that he himself is Profusion, is Poesy. The charioteer then fillips with his fingers, and a stream of brilliants fly among the crowd, appearing when they leave his hand to resemble jewels, but when clutched turning to butterflies or beetles. In some cases a bright flame hovers a few moments round the head, but usually, even when alighting, immediately goes out. The lean figure (Avarice) behind the chariot now incurs the wrath of the female portion of the crowd by cracking some jokes at the spending proclivities of the sex, and then Plutus bids his attendant dragons to lower the chest, with Avarice seated on it, from the chariot. The boy-charioteer having discharged his office is then dismissed by Plutus to his own sphere.

In these two figures there is doubtless an illusion to the Grand Duke of Weimar, Karl August, and to Goethe himself. Goethe (and we must hold him to have known best) conceived that he had reason to be grateful to the duke not only for furthering his artistic aims in Weimar, but also for affording him the opportunity of a long period of rest and self-renewal in Italy, as well

as for relieving him of much of his official drudgery on his return.

The Spirit of Poetry is dismissed, and Plutus is left with his comrade Avarice. We know from Goethe's own statement that these two masks conceal Faust and Mephistopheles respectively; they have come to symbolize the introduction of the treasure which Mephistopheles had promised, and also for another purpose which will presently appear.

Plutus strikes the locks of the chest with the herald's staff, and the chest flies open, displaying caldrons filled with molten gold, also chains, rings, &c. The crowd press near to seize the treasures, but the God of Wealth dips his rod into the caldrons and sprinkles the flaming gold among the bystanders, causing them to retire in hot haste. Gold is not for the thoughtless masses, and when they chance to lay hold of it, it burns their fingers; but possessed by the intelligent, it can be kneaded into any shape; and now Mephistopheles scandalizes the women by illustrating the power of wealth in the hands of the profligate few. But Plutus warns him his pranks will not last for ever. For now there come on a riotous band (the continuation of the interrupted and pre-arranged masquerade), announcing the approach of the great earthly divinity. They are the ministers and body-guard of the all-powerful monarch, attired as fauns, satyrs, gnomes, giants. Then the emperor himself, disguised as

Pan, the All, with a beard of tow and in a coat of twigs besmeared with resin. He appears in the midst of a circle of nymphs. A deputation of gnomes now comes forward, and begs Pan to peer into the earth's interior upon a concealed treasure, which is his by divine right. The emperor with delight bends down to view the riches which will soon be his. But the mass is molten, and as he stoops too close his inflammable beard and garments catch fire, and soon he and his attendants are wrapped in flame. The pomp and glory of monarchy is turned to ashes. Plutus then strikes upon the ground, when cooling vapours rise, and, discharging copious showers, extinguish the conflagration. There can be little doubt that this finale to the masquerade is typical of revolution (especially the great French Revolution). The masque of Society we saw passed into a masque of Government, ushered in by genius, true wisdom; and genius having shown the way for wealth, had to flee before the oncoming of material forces. Wealth became amassed by the few chiefly at the head of affairs—a wide gulf was fixed between the luxurious aristocrats and the swarthy masses sweltering in their grimy workshops for the benefit of those in high places. Matters proceeded quietly, however, until the ruling powers went a little too far, and, oblivious of the gathering fires, stooped to clutch the last treasure of the people, taxing them to their utmost

resources. Then the great conflagration, and the temporary overthrow of political order.<sup>1</sup>

The next morning Faust, as arch-conjurer and contriver of the *dénoûment*, appears before the emperor to ask pardon for the scare he has given him overnight; but the latter, far from having been angry, has been immensely diverted, and hopes for another exhibition of his skill at a future time. Presently the councillors of state rush breathlessly in, declaring an unheard-of wonder. The vast state-debt has been

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<sup>1</sup> In Eckermann's "Conversations," Dec. 20, 1829, the scene just described is alluded to. "We then talked of the Grand Carnival, and the possibility of representing it upon the stage. 'It would be a little more than the market-place at Naples,' said I. 'It would require a very large theatre,' said Goethe, 'and is hardly to be imagined.' 'I hope to see it some day,' was my answer." Eckermann did not, any more than the author, live to see the representation of the second part, but its performance is now not an uncommon event in the leading towns of Germany. It is not unusual to represent the two parts as a trilogy, the whole being too long for even a two days' performance. Contrary to prognostication, the second part has been found to be far more effective on the stage than the first; but in truth this second part is far more dramatic than the first. The first part is essentially subjective, the second prevaillingly objective. While the former, therefore, appeals more directly to the feeling of the sympathetic mind and heart, the latter addresses itself more to the senses—the eye and ear. F. Meyer von Waldeck praises the Mannheim representation as the best up to date. "Magazin für die Literatur des In- und Auslandes," 17th Sept., 1863.

paid off to the uttermost farthing, the murmuring troops re-engaged, and the people beside themselves with joyful gratitude at the emperor's unprecedented liberality. The astonished monarch cannot understand it, until the chancellor explains that in the revel of the preceding night the emperor signed the following document :—

To all whom it concerneth be it known  
Who owns this note a thousand crowns doth own ;  
To him assured, as certain pledge, there lies,  
Beneath the Emperor's land, a boundless prize ;  
It is decreed, this wealth without delay  
To raise, therewith the promised sum to pay.

The document has been multiplied a thousandfold, and the precious leaves have been profusely distributed. The world has been made happy in an hour, and the letters of the emperor's name at the foot of the precious document is the whole extent of the alphabet that anyone will care to be acquainted with for the future. Faust and Mephistopheles, as the arch-contrivers of this splendid scheme, are at once the most favoured servants of the state. They are named guardians of the whole subsoil of the empire, and the finance minister is so far from feeling envy that he declares the new juggler to be his most valued colleague.

An unlimited paper currency to replenish exhausted royal treasuries and make everybody rich in a trice

has been one of the notable discoveries of the enlightened modern world, an idea attaining its grandest expression when the French revolutionary government issued its assignats on the promiscuous security of the greater part of the land of France. One branch of the paper-money delusion is thus concisely hit off by John Stuart Mill :—

“Mr. Attwood maintained that a rise of prices produced by an increase of paper currency stimulates every producer to his utmost exertions, and brings all the capital and labour of the country into complete employment. I presume, however, that the inducement which excited this unusual ardour in all persons engaged in production must have been the expectation of getting more commodities generally, more real wealth, in exchange for the produce of their labour, and not merely more pieces of paper. This expectation, however, must have been by the very terms of the supposition disappointed, since, all prices being supposed to rise equally, no one was really better paid for his goods than before.”

With regard to the case before us, however, it is clear that Faust did a nice stroke of business for the imperial government (although it may be doubted if he added to his real reputation thereby), for the imperial debts were wiped off without the least distress to Cabinet or Kaiser.

But the imperial gain is, of course, at the expense

of the readily-gulled multitude, who part with their real resources for these magical notes, which ultimately may fall to so low a value as to require an assignat of 600 francs to buy a pound of butter! The crafty Mephistopheles, who of course is at the bottom of the whole affair, is promoted to his new office at the right moment, for now the genuine motley reappears, and shows himself not the least wise of the giddy throng by making straight off with his share of the booty to invest it in a solid estate, which will be left high and dry when the financial deluge has subsided.<sup>1</sup>

We are now introduced to a dark gallery, whither Faust has drawn his reluctant companion. The emperor has been made rich, he has now to be amused. Faust has played his part admirably as man of business, he can attain no higher reputation in that respect. He has discovered the philosopher's stone, and turned worthless paper into a source of real wealth, but after business pleasure; and now he is to

<sup>1</sup> Eckermann records a suggestive incident in connection with this scene, Dec. 27, 1829. "To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the scene of the paper-money. . . . Scarcely had the scene been read over and discussed, when Goethe's son came down and seated himself with us at the table. . . . We made no allusion to the scene we had just read, but he began of his own accord to tell a great deal about Prussian treasury-bills, and to say that they were paid for above their value. While young Goethe went on talking in this way I looked at the father with a smile, which he returned, and thus we gave each other to understand how very *à propos* was the subject of the scene."

fill the equally important office at the court of a young prodigal prince of manager of the court theatre. The emperor wants to see presented to him the forms of the handsomest man and woman that ever lived, the world-renowned Paris and Helen.

It will be useful to revert here to the old story, which furnished the scaffolding of much of the present act. Faust, according to the "*Volksbuch*" of 1587, exhibited his magical arts before Charles the Fifth, the Emperor of Germany. The emperor, after entertaining Faust handsomely, desired to behold Alexander the Great and his spouse. Faust said he must confer with his familiar spirit. All being seated for the exhibition, Faust opens the door, when (to quote the words of the original), "Alexander entered in flesh and blood, just as he was in life, small, well-made, with thick beard, red cheeks, eyes like a basilisk. He advanced towards the emperor and made him a profound bow. When he had departed, his wife entered in her turn, and also made obeisance. She had on a robe of blue velvet adorned with gold and pearls; she was extraordinarily beautiful, had rosy cheeks like blood and milk, a tall figure." To be assured it was no illusion, the emperor, who had heard that the wife of Alexander had a mole on the nape of her neck, looked to see if it were there—and there it was, sure enough. She then vanished.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So runs the story in the first Faust-book of 1587, but the



A little further on in this book we read as follows:—"On Low Sunday some students came, uninvited, to sup with Doctor Faustus, and brought with them wine and viands; they were boon companions. The wine having circulated freely, the conversation fell upon fair women, and one of them said he had no mind to see any fair woman, unless it were the beautiful Helen of Greece, who had been the cause of the ruin of Troy, saying that she must have been beautiful, since she had been so many times carried off, and also the occasion of a long war. Doctor Faust answered, 'Since you much desire to see the beautiful person of Queen Helen, wife of Menelaus, daughter of Tyndareus and of Leda, sister of Castor and Pollux, who was the fairest woman of Greece, I will bring her before you, that you may see her for yourself in her form and stature just as she

myth had already appeared in other forms. In a poem of Hans Sachs, dated the 12th of October, 1564, the German emperor requests a necromancer to summon up Hector of Troy, Helen of Lacedaemon, and his own deceased spouse, Maria of Burgundy. At sight of the last-named the emperor cannot contain himself, and endeavours to grasp the figure, in defiance of the necromancer's warning; the spirits vanish, and the scene closes in tumult. In Lercheimer's "*Christliche Bedenken und Erinnerung an Zauberei*," published 1585, the emperor is named Maximilian, and the necromancer definitely fixed as abbot of Sponheim, Johann von Tritheim. Here only the emperor's deceased spouse is summoned up, who is recognized by the black mole on her neck.

was when alive, in the same way as I presented before the Emperor Charles the Fifth, Alexander the Great and his spouse.' The Doctor having first interdicted his companions from speaking and leaving their places, went out. When he returned, Queen Helen followed close behind him, so wonderfully beautiful that the students were quite beside themselves with admiration. The said Helen appeared in a rich robe of black purple, her hair loose, brilliant as gold, and so long that it reached to her knees; with fine black eyes like coal, lips red as cherries, a small mouth, a swan's neck, cheeks red as a rose, countenance very beautiful and shining, and a figure tall, erect, and graceful. In short, it was not possible to find an imperfection in her. She glanced round the room with a look bold and haughty, and the students were inflamed with love for her, but as they considered her to be a spirit, their ardour soon waned, and Helen went out with Doctor Faust."

Where it is possible, we always find Goethe leaning upon the old legend; in the present case he mingles two stories, and makes Faust now evoke Paris and Helen (not Hector and Maria, nor Alexander and Roxana) before the emperor and his court. But the old story is the merest framework, the naïve legend blossoming into a profound allegory in the hands of the modern artist.

Faust wants the aid of Mephistopheles, but the latter has no power over the heathen world,—he

belongs to the Middle Age, not classic Greece. But still, though he cannot himself fetch the ancient beauties, he can indicate to Faust the means by which they are to be evoked.

Loth am I higher secrets to unfold.  
In solitude, where reigns nor space nor time,  
Are goddesses enthroned from early prime;  
'Tis hard to speak of beings so sublime—  
The Mothers are they.

FAUST (*terrified*).  
Mothers!

MEPHISTOPHELES.  
Tremblest thou?

FAUST.  
The Mothers! Mothers! strange it sounds, I trow!

MEPHISTOPHELES.  
And is so: Goddesses, to men unknown,  
And by us named unwillingly, I own.  
Their home to reach, full deeply must thou mine.  
That we have need of them, the fault is thine!

FAUST.  
The way?

MEPHISTOPHELES.  
No way; to the untrodden none,  
Not to be trodden, neither to be won  
By prayer! Art ready for the great emprise?  
No locks are there, no bolts thy way to bar,  
By solitudes shalt thou be whirl'd afar:  
Such void and solitude canst realize?—S.

Faust reminds him that he has trodden solitary

paths before now, but could not endure it—it was the insupportable nature of such an existence that caused him to prefer even the companionship of the Devil. Did he not once dwell only in the regions of inanities?

The empty learned, the empty taught.

Yes, but it was not empty enough. The old emptiness was the emptiness of a hollow skull—mere forms of logic without content—there was no reality to be conjured out of that void,—but there is a void, a void of voids, the abysm of thought; thither must Faust wend if he would raise classic beauties, and though the loneliness will be awful in its stillness, he must not once quail, or he will be lost for aye.

It is the Mothers he must seek—the fountain-heads of Being—beyond time and space, who give birth to all that is and ever will be.

Eckermann tried in vain to elicit from Goethe who these said Mothers were. Goethe only answered by mysteriously repeating, “The Mothers! Mothers! it sounds so singular,” and saying that he had read in Plutarch that there were certain ancient divinities called “Mothers.” “This is all I owe to others, the rest is my own invention.” Turning to Plutarch, we find in the “Life of Marcellus,” chapter xx., the statement: “There is in Sicily a town called Engyum, not large, indeed, but very ancient, and celebrated for the appearance of the goddesses called the Mothers.”

Further, in chapter xxii. of "The Cessation of Oracles," there is a curious passage containing the report of certain theosophic opinions of a "barbarian" sage. "He told me," says Cleombrotus, "that there were neither an infinite number of worlds, nor a single one, nor yet five, but one hundred and eighty-three, arranged in the form of a triangle, each side of which contains sixty worlds. Of the remaining three, one is placed at each angle, and those in line touch each other, revolving gently as if in a dance. The area within this triangle is the common hearth of them all, and is named the 'Plain of Truth,' in which the reason, the forms, and the pattern of all things that have been, and that shall be, are stored up not to be disturbed; and as eternity dwells around them, from thence time, like a stream from a fountain, flows down upon the worlds. The sight and contemplation of these things is vouchsafed to the souls of men once in every ten thousand years: that is, if they shall have lived a virtuous life. The best of our initiatory rites here below are the dreamy shadows of that spectacle, and of that rite."<sup>1</sup>

All who have meditated on the subject seem to agree that in the passage of our poem we have an allusion to something very like Plato's archetypal Ideas. In the "Republic" we are told that these alone

<sup>1</sup> Bohn's Classical Library, "Plutarch's Morals," translated by C. W. King, M.A. 1882.

are real ; that what we are wont to call realities are but shadows thrown on a wall by eternal essences invisible to the common eye ; that if we would enter into the true world we must turn our backs upon the sphere of common experience, and, retiring from the shadowy daily life of mankind, endeavour by an intense effort of solitary contemplation to see with the inner eye the unchangeable forms above the sphere of generation. It is not to be supposed, however, that Goethe consciously expressed the doctrine of any school of speculative thought. He was poet, and exercised a poet's right to be free to have his own dream, without being bound to definite interpretations.<sup>1</sup>

Goethe was poet, and not philosopher. This is never to be forgotten ; but in affirming that plainly it must also not be forgotten that poetry and philosophy are in the highest forms very closely akin, if not identical. It is the function of the supreme poet to give material shape to that which is conceived by the productive philosopher as pure Notion. But the symbol is worthless without an embodiment, and Goethe was implicit philosopher as Plato implicit poet. Indeed, we see that neither can exercise his function without passing into the sphere of the other. Hegel cannot rest with his pure Idea, but must develop it into a concrete world ; and the author of "*Faust*," while he lays hold of the concrete fact as his starting-point, inevit-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

ably shivers it into abstractions, so that at the very end he can only stammer with the mystics. But the poetic bias is just revealed in this first-hand resort to the embodied form. Goethe always affirmed that the speculative critics were astray in seeking to discover a developed Idea in "Faust," and in undoubted good faith. His mind could not but move in the forms of concrete symbol. So now this inexplicable original productivity which he himself possessed in so large a measure is bodied forth as nameless goddesses; and in reference to the work which the man Faust has in hand, we need go no further in our attempt to declassify this symbol than to see in it the wonderful power of the creative human brain, a power sufficiently marvellous, to whoever chooses to reflect on it, to hush the light word of a superficial materialism. Goethe probably gave expression in this place to the feeling of overwhelming awe exercised by the thought of an occult principle conjuring out of the inane a whole world of Art, things and scenes long passed away, or that even never had material existence at all.

No wonder Faust was struck dumb at the mention of that unlocalized power, that shaping principle that is nowhere nowhen, but whose creations are more substantial than even this solid globe itself, which one day will pass, "and leave not a wrack behind."

Mephistopheles is indicating to Faust the way to revive for living eyes the departed glories of a remote

past. Paris and Helen once lived, it is true, in the visible presence of mankind, but the best part never had birth, nor ever will decay. The penetrating eye of genius may see Helen now more vividly than the heroes who fought before Troy. Perfect beauty dwells in the kingdom of real being, a realm accessible at all times only to the few who possess the *key* of insight which can unlock the enchanted mansion. Let Faust turn his back upon weak imitations, let him take the key of spiritual sympathy, which will gravitate insensibly to the seat of eternal beauty, follow boldly its secret leading, and grasp the sacred tripod of the pure ideal, from the incense burnt whereon shall arise the wraiths of the most fascinating loveliness which human sight can discern. The only danger which lurks in the attempt—a veritable danger to the realist Mephistopheles—is that, entranced by the vision, the son of genius may lose himself in the contemplation of pure ideals, and, forgetful of the conditions of realized existence, may henceforth remain in the sphere of bare abstractions. To seek strength and power from the Mothers is well, to abide with them eternally is to lose the power of the artist, to be burnt, like Semele, with excess of divine light.

While the guests assemble, Mephistopheles as magic doctor is besieged by court lords and ladies anxious to have their ailments instantly removed, their pet projects brought at once to satisfactory



*dénoûments*, their private loves and hates miraculously gratified. There is satire in this scene on homoeopathy, quack medicaments, &c.—it gives the reader time to meditate on Faust's strange quest, and to exhibit the quite other aims of the would-be spectators of the result of this wonderful journey.

And now we are introduced to the dimly-lighted Hall of the Knights, where the wondrous spirit-scene is to be enacted. The emperor is stationed in the centre before the tapestried wall, the notabilities around him, and in the rear the (frivolous) crowd of well-dressed lords and ladies. Mephistopheles enters the prompter's box, with the object of inspiring the astrologer, who is stationed during the performance on one side of the proscenium as describer of the incidents. The walls roll back by magic art and reveal a vast stage. A massive Doric temple is the only object at first visible. The criticism begins with the architect's observation that the antique is bad style. The tapering filigree column is to his mediæval taste, the pointed arch elevates the mind far more. Then Faust, clad like a priest of the ancient mysteries, with a tripod from which exhales incense-fumes, rises up from the ground. Surely this is not going to be a secular entertainment but a temple service, but hear the hierophant:—

In your name, Mothers, ye who on your throne  
Dwell in the infinite, for aye alone,

Yet sociably! Around your heads are rife  
 Life's pictures, restless, yet devoid of life;  
 What was, there moveth, bright with lustrous sheen:  
 For deathless will abide what once hath been.  
 This ye dispense, beings of matchless might,  
 To day's pavilion, to the vault of night:  
 Life in its gentle course doth some arrest;  
 Of others the bold magian goes in quest,  
 In rich profusion, fearless, he displays  
 The marvels upon which each longs to gaze.—S.

And now the astrologer reports that as soon as the key touches the censers a cloud rises, and circles round the roof, whence issue musical tones, which float melodiously by, and infect even the pillared shaft and the triglyph, so that the whole temple vibrates with harmony.<sup>1</sup> Then the mist subsides, and a phantom youth steps forth—the Phrygian Paris. The comments of the courtiers are at once piquant and trivial. The ladies think him almost perfect, the gentlemen declare him wanting in good breeding. The youth falls asleep, when lo! the beautiful Helen. Mephistopheles does not find her to his taste, the astrologer is captivated, but Faust is almost beside himself, declaring the image he once saw in the magic mirror to have been only a daub

\*  
<sup>1</sup> “‘I have found a paper of mine among some others,’ said Goethe to-day, ‘in which I call architecture “petrified music.” Really there is something in this; the tone of mind produced by architecture approaches the effect of music.’”—*Eckermann*.

compared with such a masterpiece. The spectators exchange their observations; the ladies pick plenty of holes, while the gentlemen are equally loud in their praises. Paris presently awakes, and the astrologer reports that he is now about to carry Helen off. At this Faust becomes excited. Forgetful that the phantoms have been raised by himself, he addresses Paris as a being of flesh and blood, requiring him to desist. The youth does not heed; Faust rushes forward upon the stage. He seizes Helen, whose image instantly becomes cloudy, turns his key towards Paris, when there ensues an explosion. Faust is flung prostrate to earth, the spirits are dissipated, the court breaks up in tumult, in the midst of which Mephistopheles bears the paralyzed man away on his shoulder.

It is the old Faust then still, the victim of unrestrainable impulse, the man who no sooner catches sight of a great ideal than he rushes forward to grasp it, forgetful of the limitations placed to human endeavour; the same subtle aspiring nature, but apparently not to be taught that perfection cannot be attained at a single bound, but must be slowly struggled after according to unalterable prescribed conditions. His first splendid vision ~~was~~ Absolute Truth. He eagerly darted off to hold it, and when the spirit oozed through his fingers he gave himself up to the wail of utter despair. And now it is the

Perfect Beautiful that he thinks to hold fast with the first grasp. He no sooner perceives a novel glory than he must instantly embrace it—but the recoil is equally swift. He is dashed helpless to the earth. The beautiful Helena is not to be possessed by a wild rush.

The second part of our poem then, just as the first, begins with a Titanic effort to realize an ideal, and with a terrible rebuff. As before Faust had to be told that truth was not to be found in the solitary path of dead learning, but in the social walks of living experience,—so, having entered on the right track, he has still a long arduous journey before him ere he possess the Helena he so much desires. The form of his ideal now is the highest Art, and the proper feeling for following that aim is no frivolous one, but a sacred passion, as of the neophyte aspiring to be initiated into the most solemn mysteries. And we need not find much difficulty in comprehending how this great quest of the second part of our story joins on to the first, the unity of the poem being unbroken. Margaret was the living presentment of the ideal Helen. Faust could not have been initiated into the temple of the beautiful without the deepest experience of personal love, and the apprehension of the Beautiful according to Goethe is likewise the perception of the True. We already see that our "Faust" is beginning to outgrow the definite limits of a personality, that in

fact we have here something more than a grand individual, viz., Humanity. Only thus can we explain the place assigned to Art in the course of Faust's development. Irrational as we may find it, art really attained a high development earlier than either civil polity or a beneficent social system—Greece preceded Rome, Rome preceded industrial England and America. It is possible the development may be really circular, that the industrialism of the present is only a point in a re-entering historic line which will be rounded by a more splendid art-age than the world has yet known; but Goethe did not invert the order when he gave the first place in Faust's spiritual ascent to so little life-sub-serving an aim as art and poetry.

Recurring to the last scene, note the unconcealed satire in the contrast between the artist and the contemplators of his work. First, there is the emperor and his ministers, who *will* the creation of the great poem, although they have not the ghost of an idea how it is to be produced, looking upon it as a sort of manufactured article which can be fabricated at a moment's notice. Then the comments of the fashionable crowd. The observation of the more external features, the lack of any perception of the artistic beauties themselves, to say nothing of any deep feeling or sentiment of awe, no one thinking it necessary to forget himself for a moment to refrain

from criticism, at least as long as the piece is in progress. Here Goethe gave a hint to the Weimar and perhaps other circles. The drama was to him a ritual, not a puppet-show. Let the work presented be truly the creation of genius, and no higher education could be afforded than that of the theatre; but then the auditor must enter as an unspoiled child, and surrender himself to the illusion that there before him move the spirits of the past, not the embodiment of frivolous contemporary aims. First reverence, then criticism—such is the golden order for dealing with every work of true genius.

As we proceed we shall find ourselves getting more and more removed from the tone of the First Part, until we meet with an echo of its spirit in drawing to a close. That first short introductory scene of this opening act must stand as the representative of a long period of awakening perception. In tracing Faust's career, the First Part indicates (though I do not insist upon it, believing it may be easily misunderstood) a descending scale in Faust's character—the Second a gradual ascent. Faust is riper in the Second Part; hence the more even flow of the verse, the less passionate tone, the greater tendency to the abstract. The fire of youth is over—both with the hero and the author—and a milder but not less beautiful light illuminates the pilgrim's path.

The author could not but go the way of all great poets

who live long enough, and exhibit the inevitable tendency to pass from the concrete to allegory and symbol. At the same time, what is so remarkable in the second part of our poem, and makes it the author's most finished work, is the blending of the writer's subjective experience with a thorough grasp of reality,—no falling-off in that dramatic skill which causes the characters to stand lifelike before the beholder (witness the first act, with its varied life and colour), and yet ever and anon the opening up of some vista that permits a glimpse of a vast dim region, not perhaps illumined by the light of common day, but in which the adventuring mind may descry some special beauties, if it have only patience and a sympathetic imagination.

## VII.

### THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST BEAUTIFUL.

**A**LTHOUGH only a few years have passed since the signing of the famous bond, no time has been lost in carrying into effect its provisions. Faust has seen many phases of both low and high life, has been stirred by the deepest of emotions, and has had a full measure of vulgar joys. His happiest time, perhaps, was when his lot was most confined, the seclusion of the little village with the alternating charm of one simple self-forgetting heart and Nature's beauty; but there followed the entrance into the great world, first the dissipations (not always of the highest kind) typified by the revel on the Brocken, then the more refined, but scarcely more elevating diversions, of the residence at court. But though in the last case the entertainment was not meagre, it speedily palled, and left him spiritually empty. He had to withdraw from the gay but empty throng into the recesses of his own soul, and seek more exclusively satisfaction in



a sublime effort to recover the long-departed spirit of antique beauty.

When his old inward world was shattered, you will remember the spirits chanted :—

Build it once more !  
In thine own bosom the lost world restore !  
Now with unclouded sense  
Enter a new career ;  
Songs shall salute thine ear  
Ne'er heard before.

He had not at first realized the meaning of those profound words. He rushed impetuously out of his prison into the many-coloured outer world, and, heedless of the limitations of actuality, attempted, as he himself says at a later date, to *storm through* life. Not till he resolved to seek the lonely Mothers did he heed the admonition which apparently entered an unregarding ear. Then for the first time he withdrew into himself, and strove to rebuild in his bosom the fair inner world whose predecessor he had shattered to ruins with a curse. But even in the prosecution of this great aim he was unwise. He imagined that while still on romantic soil he could grasp the full spirit of the Beautiful. He made a daring effort, and mental disorder and confusion was the consequence. It was not in the rude North (although that was not devoid of aesthetic elements) that the spirit of harmony was to be gained. Helena dissolves in his arms in

that uncongenial clime, and her invoker lies prostrate, a rash neophyte smitten for prematurely lifting the Isis-veil. The aspirant lies utterly helpless, and apparently spiritually annihilated. He must be cared for without delay, but where is the physician who is equal to the office? His acute but narrow-minded attendant cannot possibly comprehend the nature of the disease he is suffering from, still less prescribe the remedy. When Faust was sick to death before, this shrewd companion took him to the Witch's Kitchen, to the genius of normal sensuous gratification, in order that he might drink that renewing draught which his long-repressed animal nature craved. That remedy would be idle now. He must be brought under a more subtle influence.

Of all the places in the world where recovery was least to be expected might have seemed his old, musty, worm-eaten Gothic chamber. And yet thither it is that the Spirit of Contradiction rightly carries him. The watchful comrade lays him on his old bed in the long-undusted room, which has been locked up as a mysterious sanctum since the day of the professor's departure, and as the curtain is lifted we catch a glimpse of a figure in a recumbent attitude, apparently lifeless. Mephistopheles, stepping forward, comments on the unaltered state of the interior—even the quill with its red stain, a silent reminder of a memorable moment. Remembering the time when he played

professor in Faust's long robe, he takes down the fur gown from the hook, and moths, crickets, and chafers fly out with a chorus of joyful welcome. Even dead old college gowns can hatch living seeds, especially if they have been worn by the Devil, and here are the vermin which misdirected learning always breeds, the tribe of perverse theories and erudite crotchets now shaken out into every corner of the learned world. Mephistopheles dons the professorial mantle and pulls the bell, which peals through the building, causing walls to quake and corridors to rattle, and the Famulus of Faust's successor hurries in in amazement to obey the strange call.

The erewhile assistant has advanced in dignity, and the fame of Professor Wagner has spread far and wide. This is his Famulus, a faithful continuer of the old tradition. But Faust's magic seems to have infected his former dry-as-dust assistant, and the new Famulus tells us how his master, abandoning the field of textual criticism, has fitted up a laboratory, and is engaged in endeavouring by experiment to peer into the secrets of Nature. He has been occupied now for months with some mysterious research, and his orders are strict that he should on no account be disturbed. But on Mephistopheles assuring him that it lies in his power to expedite this great work, the Famulus departs to report the stranger's desire to be witness of the operation.

Mephistopheles seats himself with gravity in the doctor's chair, when storming along the corridor comes a young man of the age of twenty-five or thereabouts, dressed in the height of fashion, and without showing the least sign of awe at the solemnities of the place. The professor and the young man at once recognize each other—this is the ingenuous youth who on the eve of Faust's departure came to enrol himself in the most useful of the faculties, and here he revisits the old haunts as full-fledged Baccalaureus. His air shows that his period of tutelage is over, that he has faithfully followed the precept graciously inscribed by his preceptor in his album—

Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil—

has come to see through the nonsense of the schools, and has found in his own vast experience the key to absolute truth. He is the representative of a new race of scholars. He plainly states his opinion that wisdom is born and dies with youth, that the expounders of ancient lore are a set of old fogies, that nothing more is to be done by gathering material, brooding, sifting, that fresh young blood is all that is wanted, that when a man has attained the age of thirty he is to all intents and purposes a corpse, and that it would even be well to expedite the departure into the other world of such superannuated bores.

From the confident utterances of this young gentle-

man it has commonly been thought that the philosopher Fichte sat for the portrait of the Baccalaureus. There were certain elements in Fichte's creed and character which laid him open to a little genial banter, and the following passage among others was possibly in Goethe's mind:<sup>1</sup>—"When they had passed their thirtieth year one could have wished for their own reputation, and the advantage of the world, that they had died, since from that age onward they only lived to injure themselves and their surroundings."<sup>2</sup>

Fichte was the first exponent of that kind of philosophy called Absolute which has since played so important a part in Germany and elsewhere. Without pronouncing upon the importance of rival schools, there is abundant evidence of the peril of such a form of dogmatic idealism for young minds. If undisciplined in the slow processes of natural science, a youthful partisan of an absolute philosophy is apt to imagine that wisdom is something to be attained at a bound, that the possession of certain metaphysic formulæ gives the right to look down from some lofty height upon those who pursue the contrary method of attempting to rise by lifelong effort from the ground

<sup>1</sup> "Sämmtliche Werke." Siebenter Band, 1846, p. 520.

<sup>2</sup> The statement is in reference to the speedy collapse of origination in the men of the close of the last century. It may, however, be understood universally (and with not a little truth) in respect of the cynical temper that often comes with years, and is inimical to a nobler life.

of the positively-known to the widest generalizations of experience. But Goethe, when questioned by Eckermann about the bachelor of our poem, "Whether he was not meant to represent a certain class of ideal philosophers?" answered, "No, the arrogance which is peculiar to youth is personified in him. Indeed everyone believes in his youth that the world really began with him, and that all merely exists for his sake." On another occasion he is reported to have said, "People talk for ever of originality, but what does it all mean? As soon as we are born the world begins to operate upon us, and continues to do so to the end. And everywhere what can we call specially our own except energy, strength, and will? If I should declare for how much I am indebted to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would not be a great deal left."

From the aspirant paralyzed by the vision of an unattainable ideal and the young Bachelor of Arts who imagines his education is finished and that henceforth he can shine by his unassisted light, we pass to the painstaking scientist who is endeavouring to wring from Nature her secrets by the appliances of mechanical art. The plodding Wagner, who once showed to such disadvantage beside his loftily-aiming companion, has now to receive his due, the fruit of his best powers being revealed, although the limitations are also pretty plainly shown.

The indefatigable Wagner has grown tired of poring over his venerable tomes, and is now desirous of being not only a reporter of the opinions of others, but himself creative. Like his master, he has become more ambitious as time has advanced, and he aspires now to a great height indeed,—he will outdo all his predecessors, he will create a marvel the like of which has never been seen. Mephistopheles finds him in his laboratory anxiously bending over a phial in which some substance appears to be crystallizing.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*whispering*).

What is it then?

WAGNER (*whispering*).

A man is being made.

Wagner is the author of a new method of discovery, the substitution of crystallization for organization. (Mephistopheles remarks there is surely nothing new under the sun, for he has often in his travels seen specimens of crystallized humanity.) Science is undoubtedly a potent wonder-worker, she can dissipate the compound of Nature's workshop without difficulty, she can make the so-called organic products of vegetable and animal secretion, but though she can produce the organic she cannot organize. She may conjure up an eidolon perhaps, but not breathe into its nostrils the breath of life. She may clothe a body, but not incarnate a soul.

Goethe probably derived the idea of this fabrication of Homunculus from the famous alchemist Theophrastus Paracelsus,<sup>1</sup> in the first book of whose work, "De Generatione Rerum," occur full directions for solving the problem. These directions are not altogether pleasant reading, and all that is of interest for our poem is contained in a few words. "The ingredients," writes Paracelsus, "must attain such a state of putrescence that the mass moves and stirs. After such time it will somewhat resemble a human being, transparent, however, and without a body." These translucent homunculi, Paracelsus asserted, would possess extraordinary powers, and be more like the elementary spirits than human beings, "for as they have obtained existence by art, art will be engrained and innate in them." It can, however, scarcely be mere coincidence that a real Johann Jakob Wagner, professor at Würzburg, wrote in a work entitled "Der Staat," published in 1815, p. 261, as follows, "Es ist noch ein Experiment zu machen das geraume Zeit hindurch nicht gelingen wird, nämlich zwei einander entgegengesetzte voltaische Säulen auf einen Punkt wirken zu lassen. *Gelingt das Experiment so wird das*

<sup>1</sup> Simon Magus also boasted of possessing this skill. "Once on a time, I, by my power, turning air into water, and water again into blood, and solidifying it into flesh, formed a new creature—a boy." "Clementine Recognitions," ii., c. 15. Cf. "Homilies," ii., c. 26.



*Resultat ein organisches Produkt sein, denn Leben ist überall, man darf es nur erwecken."*<sup>1</sup> (There is one more experiment to be tried that will not succeed for a long time, viz., to cause two opposed voltaic piles\*to act on one point. When the experiment succeeds the result will be an organic product, for life is everywhere,—it only needs to be awakened.)

Returning to the story, we find the process at last complete, and a crystallized mannikin appears in the glass bottle. And a lively youth too, full-grown at once apparently, for he proceeds quite familiarly to address his creator :—

How goes it, Daddy ? It was then no jest.  
Come press me tenderly upon thy breast,  
But not too hard for fear the glass might shatter.

(*Then to Mephistopheles.*)

Thou rogue, Sir Cousin, here I find thee too,  
And at the proper time, my thanks are due.  
A lucky fortune led thee here to me ;  
Since I exist, then I must active be.  
I'd fain begin my work without delay.

Mephistopheles points to a side-door through which one catches a glimpse of the sleeping Faust. The phial slips out of Wagner's hand, and hovers over Faust's head ; then Homunculus reports his dream, a dream of nymphs and fountains, of Leda and the divine swan, parents of Helena. Mephistopheles is

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Hohlfeld in "Archiv für literarische Geschichte," 1877, p. 561.

puzzled at this clearness of perception,—he can see nothing of it all, and naturally, for Mephistopheles is a mediaeval spirit, his home is in gloomy Gothic chambers like these, in the gross climate of the barbarous North.<sup>1</sup>

Homunculus declares that Faust must be instantly borne away from the spot—if he awake there he will perish. Mephistopheles is at first reluctant to go, but, on being reminded that there are witches also in Thessaly, consents to follow the lead of Homunculus, and the sleeping Faust having been wrapped in the magic cloak, the three commence their aërial flight, Homunculus bidding farewell to the disconcerted Wagner, telling him he has good work yet to do among his old parchments, a career of academic honour, some wealth and fame.

Here we have Faust's second start in life. That start must and could only be made from the old haunts. He has visited them for the last time, though unconsciously. He must find his next training-ground in ancient Greece. He is to be guided thither by

<sup>1</sup> "Generally," said Goethe to Eckermann, "you will perceive that Mephistopheles appears to disadvantage beside the Homunculus, who is like him in clearness of intellect, and so much superior to him in his tendency to the beautiful and to a youthful activity. He styles him cousin; for such spiritual beings as this Homunculus, not yet saddened and limited by a thorough assumption of humanity, were classed with the demons, and thus there is a sort of relationship between the two."

Homunculus, the product of the exertions of the condemned Wagner. How is this? Well, here we have a reflex of the life-story of the author. When Goethe wrote the early powerful scenes of the First Part he was the impetuous Faust himself, the despiser of learning, the ridiculer of closet-studies and patient research. But, after he had for a little while stormed through the world, he began to see that the fortress of truth was not to be carried by assault, but must be gained by steady sap and mine. The self-sufficient poet became frequenter of art-galleries and physical experimenter. Although experimenting and the study of ancient art and literature was not all, it was very much, it was an indispensable preliminary to artistic creation. He would show us then that Wagners are really of great use in the world, that their laborious efforts to revive the past are inspirations of the ideal, and that though they cannot supply the mysterious bond which makes a living creature, they can smooth the way which the creative mind must of necessity go. Homunculus, the child of Wagner and Mephistopheles (for the presence of the latter is equally indispensable), is the creation of Learning, striving after its fashion to be productive under the controlling influence of the spirit of limitation. But the offspring of such parents is incomplete, in the keeping of its originator is shut off by an impassable barrier from contact with the actual world, it needs to be taken to the ocean of Reality before

it can itself become active, but it can perform the part of revealer of the land which the truly productive nature must personally explore.

The trio are off to the Thessalian plains. Faust has to live through another Walpurgis Night, not a night whereby he loses his Margaret, but one through which he gains a Helena. His seething contemporary world led him astray, the world of the completed past will guide him aright; though at first all will be dense gloom, he will emerge into the brilliant day.

The scene of the classical Walpurgis Night is that half of the rich land of Thessaly which looks towards the Aegean, including the fabled home of the old Grecian gods, Mount Olympus, and the lovely haunts of Apollo, the vale of Tempe, together with that famous battle-ground where, on the 6th of June, B.C. 48, Caesar and Pompey grappled for the empire of the world, the plain of Pharsalus.

According to the beliefs of many peoples, the decisive battles of the world are always being re-fought by the spirits of the departed on the anniversary of the original conflict. And the time of the visit of our airy wanderers to the home of classic beauty is that very night when the ghosts of the armies of Caesar and Pompey, by the light of the dim ghostly watch-fires, in presence of the spectral tents, meet to renew the awful combat. Looked at in every point of view

here was the significant spot for the Classical Walpurgis Night. No other part of Greece but Thessaly could have served the purpose as well. For here reigned an air of mystery, a demoniac influence, which was wanting in the less superstitious climate of Attica and Sparta.

After the glory of Athens had departed, and the old polytheism had spent its force, the more northerly parts of Greece were of greater consequence to the newly-risen power of the West, while Olympus still exercised a remnant of its former sway through the utterances of aged brones, whose wild words were accepted as divine oracles. Such an one now appears to describe the scenes of this awful night. Erichtho was the name of a Thessalian enchantress who, according to Lucan, was interrogated by Pompey's son Sextus, as to the issue of the contest, on the eve of the battle. She is ennobled by the modern poet, and appears as a stately figure, who, so far from being animated by the malicious spirit of the genuine witch, retires before the approach of living beings, lest her presence harm them.

It is thick gloom. Erichtho describes the midnight battling, important enough to be witnessed by the spirits of ancient fable. As the moon rises the spectral hosts disappear, and Erichtho, scenting the airy travellers from the north, flits to her cave.

The ghosts have disappeared, leaving only their

blue watch-fires, and also the cloud of witnesses, who will soon be visible to the visitors in the pale light. As Faust, hitherto supported on the mantle of Mephistopheles (the latter guided by the shining glass of Homunculus), touches earth, he recovers consciousness, and asks, "Where is she?"—"she," of course, the shade whose attempted seizure had been punished by paralysis, and who had been the inspirer of the dream of Leda which Homunculus had described in Wagner's cell. But no one can answer his question. He must wander as best he may through this flaming labyrinth, and hope for happy issue. His courage at once rises high. He feels he is on Grecian ground, and though it is all strange and confusing, his heart is fired with a great hope. Homunculus and Faust choose their several paths of exploration, the little man promising to reunite the party when needful by his shining glass, and Mephistopheles is left to contemplate the strange figures which puzzle him beyond measure.

His first exclamation is one of horror—the modern Devil is shocked by the impropriety of the nude antique: the figures should be decently clothed or pasted over. At last he overcomes his scruples so far as to approach and address a few of the least human. He selects the ugliest, the griffins, their body that of a lion, head and wings those of an eagle, who are said to have their home in the far east, in some district between the vague Hyperboreans and

the one-eyed Arimaspians. The griffins, the colossal ants, and the Arimaspians (mounted on horseback, and therefore here symbolized, we may suppose, by a horse) are to be taken as the oldest attempts at living art. Mephistopheles next addresses the calm sphinxes, the representatives of Egyptian art, half-women, half-lion, therefore a higher type of art, a first attempt to express the supreme form of beauty, the human. The griffins snarl when addressed, they are wholly brutal. The semi-human sphinxes, without the passion of the beast or the mobility of feature of the man, are coldly still, a perpetual riddle to the beholder. Mephistopheles hints at the mystery of their origin when he asks, as once did Oedipus, for a riddle, but the sphinx replies, You yourself are the greatest riddle—read that—

To both devout and wicked necessary ;  
To those a breast-plate for ascetic fighting ;  
To these boon comrade, in their pranks uniting ;  
And both amusing Zeus, the fun delighting.

A hard nut that to crack for the dealers in moral conundrums.

But now there are heard sweet strains overhead,  
suggestive of the music of winds and waters.

Ah ! misguided one, why linger,  
'Mid these hideous wonders dwelling ?  
Cometh each melodious singer ;—

Hark ! our choral notes are swelling  
As beseems the siren-throng.

The sirens have the form of a bird in the lower part of the body, with terrible claws, and above, from the waist upwards, the form of a woman. Their music indicates that art has begun to flow, the rigid immobility of the lower stage being overcome. One may say that these creatures represent the dawn of Greek art proper, the preceding monsters illustrating the earlier attempts of less artistic nations.

Faust now returns and recognizes a beauty in all the forms. His eye has been so sharpened, that even in the rudest attempts he recognizes the yearning after the beautiful, the effort of the fashioner to body forth in outward shape the ideal which was yet too great for his limited power of expression. He inquires of the sphinxes whether they have chanced to see the beautiful Helena. But they reply that their date is much earlier, the last lingerer having been slain by Hercules. But Chiron on this mystic night is riding about the world ; catch him if you can, he may have news for you. Faust departs to renew his search, and then the sphinxes dismiss Mephistopheles. Let him go likewise in pursuit of his ideal, the wanton Lamiae for instance, who coquet with the goat-footed satyrs. The eternal sphinxes will still be there on his return—all save those who sit in alternation a thousand years before the symbols of Egyptian greatness.



We the pyramids before  
Sit for judgment of the nations;  
War and peace and inundations  
Change our features never more.

The scene changes, and we descend to the mouth of the river Peneus. Here the old river-god is dreaming among his reeds and rushes, surrounded by nymphs and tributary streams, when he is thrilled by the sound of approaching human feet. It is Faust, who has left the old Pharsalian gloom, and is now on more congenial soil. The nymphs would retain him.

Oh, best were it for thee,  
Way-weary and sore,  
In coolness reclining  
Thy limbs to restore;—  
The rest thus enjoying  
That from thee doth flee;  
We rustle—we murmur—  
We whisper to thee.—S.

The unexpected beauties revive ancient memories, "already once was I so blessed," and he would perhaps, have been enticed by these river-sirens to linger here, but a horse's hoof is heard, and he starts up to behold the restless Chiron, the horse-body, the human head, wise too beyond that of common humanity. The mild centaur bids the man, delayed by the incomplete beauties of the stream which he cannot unaided cross, to mount his back, and he will bear him on through the flood. Faust now plies Chiron with questions

respecting Helena. The old healer of diseases looks upon Faust's quest as a symptom of madness, and as he is himself on the way to the temple of Manto, the daughter of Aesculapius, the god of healing, he will drop the afflicted man at her shrine, when he may be cured by her stronger art. Faust replies :—

But cured I would not be ! my mind is strong !  
Then were I abject like the vulgar throng !

It is no vulgar disease that Faust is suffering from ; but, the grey-headed Chiron, who has outlived the heats of youth, merely smiles, and drops him at Manto's fane.

The mild maiden Manto is sitting in her temple (which is bathed in the pale moonlight) dreaming. She is the contrast to the ever-restless Chiron. He has only time to let Faust glide from his back, and then is far on his way again, but Manto is over lost in reverie in her peaceful shrine. Both Chiron and Manto are the presiding genii of healing, but the ever-restless man, with the remnants of the beast still clinging to him, is now no healer for the ideal raver ; it is the serene maiden, whose moonlit temple is on the site of the entrance to the Hades where dwell the spirits of unchangeable beauty, who must complete the cure. Chiron, when dropping his burden, remarks :—

Him hath this ill-reputed night  
Caught in its whirl, and hither brought.

Helen, with mind and sense distraught,  
Helen he for himself would win,  
But how and when he knows not to begin;  
Worthy is he thy healing art to prove.

Manto replies :—

Who the impossible desires I love.

“Who *the impossible*”—yes, Faust has now the courage to desire the impossible—to bring back like another Orpheus his Eurydice from the shades, to let the living world see once more the glory of that vanished beauty which has made for ever the name of Greece illustrious. Manto and Faust descend to the Hades to implore its queen, Persephoneia, to release Helen. How Faust thrives in that attempt to achieve the impossible we shall learn later on.

But now we are carried back to the Pharsalian fields near the source of the river Peneus. There still are the old beauties, sirens, sphinxes, griffins. Mephistopheles is gone to seek the Lamiae. A strange event happens on the river's bank. Seismos (earthquake) is heard groaning and bellowing beneath the earth; presently the giant himself appears, being preceded by a small mountain, which he has thrown up from below. The little mountain is soon inhabited by a tiny race of pigmies and fingerlings. But the winged tenants of the neighbouring pool, the herons, do not relish the new-comers, and they assail the

pigmies; are utterly defeated, however, and their blood stains the water. The relatives of the herons, the cranes, witness the disaster, but are too few to render assistance, and fly away croaking deathless revenge.

Goethe had a double purpose in this curious episode—one scientific, the other aesthetic. About the time when he wrote the present act he was very much occupied with the question of the early formation of the earth's crust. There were two diametrically opposed geological schools,—one, the Neptunists, asserting that the successive formations were the gradual precipitate of an original universal ocean, igneous agency having played only an insignificant part in the entire process of construction. It only needed sufficient time for Nature to operate, and the utmost geologic variety could be accounted for without calling in the aid of any violent forces. This view was for some time in possession of the field, but subsequently, especially under the lead of Leopold von Buch, a contrary view prevailed, that the main agent in bringing the earth into its present form has been subterranean heat, that the more conspicuous phenomena have been the result of sudden upheaval, and that the great mountain-chains were not formed by slow uplifting of one portion of the earth's surface and unequal denudation, but by spasmodic interior thermal energy. Although the latter opinion triumphed

in his lifetime, and the Plutonists had it their own way, Goethe to the last espoused the other doctrine, more, it would seem, from a kind of scientific intuition than from the pressure of definite arguments. The proofs were not so abundant at his time as they have become since of the important part that aqueous agency has played in fashioning the earth's crust. In the scene before us he represents the victory of the Plutonists—not, however, without an unmistakable tinge of ridicule—the petty mountain and the pigmy race signifying the feeble efforts of the puny exponents of the theory of igneous formation. But the episode is not a mere *jeu d'esprit* or wilful digression on the part of the poet, a deeper purpose lies behind, a purpose which the immediate entrance of Mephistopheles strongly suggests. Goethe saw in the ocean, ever heaving but always striving to attain its level, the symbol of flowing yet self-controlled Beauty. The ugly, on the contrary, is typified by the volcano and the earthquake, with the noxious vapours and gaping chasm. What could be more antithetic to the symmetry of the beautiful than this distortion of immoderate fiery energy? And so the rough tossing of the boisterous giant heralds the approach of the spirit antithetic to the beautiful, the dweller in the sulphur-realm, who has on this dark night his aim also—to find his satisfaction in a descending scale of ugliness.

He appears on the plain grumbling that matters do not proceed as well with him in this unknown region as on the familiar Blocksberg. There he had only to beckon, and innumerable witch-beauties would welcome him as an agreeable partner; but here is a band outwardly resembling his old friends who amuse themselves at the expense of the "sinner hoary," who cannot resist the temptation to follow. They are the Lamiae, creatures who are far from being what they seem, enticing exteriorly, but who change into snakes, or shrink into skeletons, when they are grasped. One of the kindred, Empusa, appears with an ass's head to do honour to the wearer of the horse-hoof; Mephistopheles, however, declines the suggested compliment.

I see with people of this sort  
Relationship does much import—  
Yet come what may, 'tis all the same,  
The ass's head I must disclaim.

Hardly however just now, for the wily Lamiae lead him a pretty dance, until he finds himself at length far away from the plain, and near the mountain which has recently sprung up. He now stumbles up against Homunculus, who is following two philosophers engaged in eager debate. Mephistopheles advises him to steer clear of this sort of people, for they will only further bewilder him by raising fresh

phantoms. The philosophers are Anaxagoras and Thales, each of whom tried to account for the origin of all things. Homunculus is interested because he wants to find a way "to be." He is the product of artifice, is all *idea*, his quest is *realization*. Anaxagoras is the champion of the Plutonists, Thales of the Neptunists.

The cranes, augmented in number, have returned to avenge their slaughtered kin, the herons, and Anaxagoras now prays on their behalf to the great god of the Plutonists, the volcano-formed moon. His prayer is apparently partly heard, for a meteor falls, crushing the pigmies to atoms, but the cranes also. Anaxagoras is clearly moon-struck too, for he is prostrated by the sight of the awful power he believes he has himself invoked, and Thales and Homunculus pass on to be present at the approaching festival of the sea. Mephistopheles too is bidden by a dryad to explore a cavern close by, where he may perchance find his realized ideal. There dwell the Graiæ or Phorkyads, three old women, grey-haired from birth, with only one eye and one tooth for common possession. Mephistopheles begs them to shrink into two for a little while, and allow him to assume the semblance of a third. They assent, but will not part with the single tooth and eye. But that is unnecessary, for if he presses one eye close, and shows only a single canine tooth, he will present in profile one of

the grey sisterhood. He does so, and disappears remarking :—

Now must I shroud myself from mortal sight,  
In pool of Hell the devils to affright.

And now to the Thessalian coast, the rocky caves of the Aegean, where the salt spray comes wafted from the breezy ocean, where freedom reigns allied with grace, where sway the sparkling waves from whose foam the entrancing Aphrodite once arose in all her glory. It is still classical *Walpurgis Night*, but the moon is in the zenith, and is shedding her full silvery glory over the earth. The dark Pharsalian fields are far away, and the ugly outcroppings of subterranean energy. Mild peace is queen of the hour, and the sirens on the shore greet the arisen moon, asking her to be propitious to the sea-festival about to take place. Attracted by the fluting of the sirens, the Nereids and Tritons come skimming through the wave. But the sirens would to-day have these free roamers of the deep put themselves in the bonds of duty and prove their higher origin. The Nereids and Tritons reply that the same idea has also occurred to themselves, and away they steer towards the mountain-isle of Samothrace, well-nigh discernible in the far distance, to bring thence their contribution to the festival.



Thales and Homunculus now appear on the shore, the former urging the latter to make inquiry respecting his attaining to full existence of the old sea-god Nereus. But the veteran sage is weary of the race of mortals, for they are always asking his advice and never heeding it. Did not the Trojan Paris implore his counsel, and then disregard the terrible picture of the burning Ilium and his own ignominious death. Ulysses, too, he warned in vain of the enchantress Circe and the Cyclops. And to be troubled by inquisitive mortals on this day of days too, when he is expecting his daughter Galatea, the successor of the beautiful Aphrodite, to make brilliant with her trail the home of the old sea-god. Ask Proteus, he can tell best of being and becoming. Thales and Homunculus leave in search of Proteus. But now the song of the Nereids and Tritons returning from their mysterious journey rings over the deep. They will prove to-day that there is more than the fish-like animal nature in them by bringing the world's gods to preside at this unique festival. On the shell of a huge tortoise, engraved with mysterious hieroglyphics, they bear the images of the Cabiri—such images as deck the prows of vessels to preserve from shipwreck—but the part the Cabiri have to play to-day is greater than that. In the ancient world religion was at once the inspirer and ally of art—it was so too in the Middle Age, and should be so ever. So now the Cabiri are invited to

the festival, but of the four who might have come only three could be persuaded to attend.

**NEREIDS AND TRITONS.**

The three have we brought hither—  
The fourth refused us altogether.  
He the right one was, he said,  
He stood as thinker in their stead.

The three gods who are willing to come are the representatives of the old Nature-worship. If we follow the hint of the preceding scenes and look upon the griffins, the sphinxes, and sirens as ascending stages of art, then these ill-shapen fetiches will represent the corresponding religions—the Oriental, more precisely defined if we will as that of India, the religion of Egypt, and the old Pelasgian (most ancient Greek) faith. And then the god who would not come, who considered he was the only true one, the thinker-god, can be no other than the anti-idolatrous Jehovah of the Hebrews.

The sirens are ill-pleased at the absence of this one, who thought himself too good for a festival of art,—

Thus one god doth jeer  
At his fellows still !  
Do ye all good revere,  
Fear only ill !

But there are more gods still, why come they not ?  
Seven is the sacred tale, “Where then the other three ?”

## NEREIDS AND TRITONS.

That we cannot answer; rather  
 On Olympus question farther;  
 There an *eighth* perchance is pining  
 Whom none thinks upon. Inclining  
 Graciously they us have greeted—  
 But all are not yet completed.

The incomparable;—  
 Pressing onward, aye aspiring,  
 Full of longing, still desiring  
 What can ne'er be reached, to seize.—S.

Then these aspiring faiths, hardly born as yet, can hardly well be any other than the three great religions which now divide the world between them—Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism. But there is an eighth hinted at, whom one has hardly yet thought of, the religion of the author himself—the faith of the remote future, the all-reconciling religion of Humanity.

The Nereids and Tritons think they have deserved well in inaugurating the great festival with the procession of the symbols of aspiration after the Infinite:—

How brightly shines our fame, behold,  
 Leading this festivity!

And the sirens echo the cry, declaring:—

Heroes of the ancient days  
 Lack henceforth their meed of praise,  
 How great soe'er their fame of old;  
 Though they have won the fleece of gold,  
 Ye have the Cabiri!

## FULL CHORUS.

Though they have won the fleece of gold,  
We! ye! have the Cabiri.—S.

I am indebted in the main for the foregoing interpretation of the Cabiri to Hermann Küntzel,<sup>1</sup> a writer who, though belonging to the supersubtle class, I think has in this instance not gone beyond the mark.

In respect of "Faust," and especially this second part, there are two schools of critics,—the one regarding the poem as a fine piece of literary art, the product of unconscious genius, as objective and realistic as (say) a play of Shakespeare ("Hamlet," for instance), while another class endeavour to find in every verse some profound allegory or concealed wisdom. It appears to me that the truth lies in the mean between these two extremes. To regard "Faust" as a distinctly didactic poem, as an allegory such as the "Fairy Queen," appears to me not only to betray an erroneous estimate of Goethe's poetic nature, but contradicted by the author's own confessions. On the other hand, to treat "Faust" as a dramatic epic, doubtfully improved by a number of fantastic episodes without any serious content, seems to me no less beside the mark. The acme of this matter-of-fact view was reached when some robust critic characterized

<sup>1</sup> "Der zweite Theil des Goethe'schen Faust, neu und vollständig erklärt," Leipzig, 1877, pp. 67-69.

this Walpurgis Night of the second act as a rhymed Lemprière's Dictionary!

Concerning the point in the text at which we are now arrived, there is a note in Eckermann's "Conversations" which the commentators have of course pounced upon:—" 'A far richer world is displayed,' said I, 'in this second part than in the first.' 'I should think so,' said Goethe. 'The first part is almost entirely subjective; it proceeded entirely from a perplexed, impassioned individual, and his semi-darkness is probably highly pleasing to mankind. But in the second part there is scarcely anything of the subjective; here is seen a higher, broader, clearer, more passionless world, and he who has not looked about him and had some experience will not know what to make of it.'

" 'There will be found exercise for thought,' said I; 'some learning may also be needful. I am glad that I have read Schelling's little book on the Cabiri, and that I now know the drift of that famous passage in the Walpurgis Night.'

" 'I have always found,' said Goethe, laughing, 'that it is well to know something.' "

All the commentators are profuse in their details about the cultus of the priests of Samothrace and Schelling's antiquarian monograph, but Goethe's suggestive smile seems to have only caught the eye of Küntzel, who is wholly ignored by the commentators

of repute, his book being condescendingly styled a "curiosity," and therewith dismissed, by Von Loeper.<sup>1</sup>

Homunculus and Thales now approach and invoke the ever-changing Proteus. Proteus ventriloquizing calls "Here ! and here !" then, as from a distance, "Farewell !" Thales whispers to Homunculus that he is really close at hand. His weak point is an insatiable appetite for novelties ; he may possibly be caught if Homunculus throws out a bright flame from his glass. Whereupon a huge tortoise (Miss Swanwick's translation has porpoise) approaches. Thales hides Homunculus, refusing to let the light be seen until Proteus assumes a more intelligent shape. Proteus in a noble form now appears, and is amazed at the spectacle—

A glittering dwarf ! Never beheld before !

The spirit of Transformation no longer withholds his counsel, and the three move to the end of the promontory.

The procession now comes sweeping on. At the head the religious artists, the Tolchines of Rhodes (mounted on sea-horses and dragons), old workers in brass and iron (not marble), who make the sceptre of the sea-

<sup>1</sup> Kuntzel's *brochure* deserves to be better known. After the dry and useless external detail that cumber most of the larger commentaries, it is positively refreshing to come across a writer who endeavours to penetrate in an original way into the essential significance of this profound poem.

king Poseidon. They adore the mild goddess shining over them, and her glorious brother, the god of day, Phoebus Apollo, whose figure they have essayed to shape.

Proteus presently transforms himself into a dolphin, which Homunculus mounts, Thales urging the latter to try to ascend through the myriad organic forms 'up to man. Proteus counsels rather to preserve the formlessness of the spirit, and to live unfettered in the waters, for once attained to the human stature no no further transformation is possible.<sup>1</sup>

And now appear the body-guard of the Queen of the Sea, the Italian Psylli and Marsi, mounted on sea-bulls, calves, and rams. They announce themselves as the guardians of the chariot of the Queen of

<sup>1</sup> In the commencing material existence of Homunculus (man in little) in the waters, there is also no obscure reference to Goethe's faith in evolution, a doctrine already clearly expressed in the writings of Empedocles of the fifth century B.C. : —

Ἦδη γάρ ποτ' ἐγὼ γενόμεν κοῦρός τε κόρη τ'  
θάμνος τ' οἰωνός τε καὶ εἶν ἄλι ἔλλοπος ἰχθύς.

(Once I was young man and maiden,  
Beast and lone-flying bird and dumb fish in the sea.)

The following passages in Goethe's letters to Riemer are worth quoting. March 19, 1807:—"Nature makes no leaps; it could, for example, make no horse if all the other animals had not gone before on which to rise as on a ladder to the structure of the horse." Again, November 23, 1803:—"Nature, in order to attain to man, indulges in a long prelude of beings and forms in which there is little of the human discernible."

Love. They declare themselves, even though invisible, protectors of the sea-queen for all time from the eagle of Rome, the winged lion of Venice, the cross of the Crusader, and the Crescent of the Moslems.

Anon the feminine attendants of the queen appear, surrounding in ever-widening circles the shell-chariot, the robust Nereids, and the tender Dorides, the maiden saviours of shipwrecked mariners. The latter beg of Nereus immortality for their convoy of saved youths, but it is a prayer which Zeus does not accord, and the Dorides pass on with a sad lament:—

Dear ye are, sweet youths, in sooth ;  
Yet from you we needs must sever :  
We have craved eternal truth,  
But the Gods allow it never !

And now Galatea, in her chariot of pearl drawn by dolphins, approaches her venerable father.

NEREUS.

'Tis thou, my beloved one !

GALATEA.

O sire ! what delight !  
Linger, ye dolphins, enchain'd is my sight.

But the loving queen may not linger. Ruthless Time stays not even for Beauty—the glory fades even from the poetic sky and hallowed bays of the incomparable Aegean.



## NEREUS.

Gone already ! They forsake me,  
Speeding on with circling motion !  
What to them the heart's emotion !  
Oh ! that with them they would take me !  
Yet such rapture yields one gaze,  
The livelong year it well repays.

## THALES.

Hail ! all hail ! The cry renew !  
Blossoms my spirit, piercèd through  
By the Beautiful, the True ! . . .  
All from water sprang amain !  
All things water doth sustain :  
Ocean grant thy deathless reign !  
Were no clouds by thee outspread,  
No rich brooklets by thee fed,  
On their course no rivers sped,  
And no streamlets perfected,  
What then were the world, what ocean and plain ?  
'Tis thou, who the freshness of life doth maintain !—S.

And the collective circle of this procession of the  
Beautiful fling back the echo.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Max Koch, in the "Goethe-Jahrbuch," vol. v., 1884, pp. 319-320, calls attention to the resemblance between the termination of the second act and the close of Calderon's "Ueber allen Zauber Liebe" (Love superior to all enchantment). This play formed one of the collection of Calderon's dramas translated by A. W. Schlegel, published in 1809, and which Goethe is known to have read. In this play, which describes the fruitless effort of Circe to captivate Ulysses, the enchantress by her art suffuses the sea with fire. Then "the sea brightens, and there appears in a triumphal car, drawn by two dolphins, Galatea, surrounded by several Tritons and Sirens with musical instruments."

Smaller and smaller grows the image of the pearl-chariot of Galatea, but the circle of shining attendants never seems to end, and the glory irradiates the whole sea. But lo! a new and unlooked-for brilliancy attracts the keen eye of the straining Nereus. A flash on the water near the glorious chariot, then a ripple of light round the feet of the divine occupant.

THALES.

Homunculus is it, by Proteus betrayed. . . .  
A yearning majestic these symptoms disclose,  
Presageful they tell of his passionate throes;  
Against the bright throne he'll be shattered! It glows,  
It flashes, it sparkles, abroad now it flows!

SIRENS.

What marvel illumines the billows, which dash  
Against one another in glory? They flash,  
They waver, they hitherward glitter, and bright  
All forms are ablaze in the pathway of night;  
And all things are gleaming, by fire girt around.  
Prime source of creation, let Eros be crowned!—S.

The *ideal* Homunculus then has found the way to real birth. He had to be incarnated in the waters of Greece—thus far he had had no true being, he had been a child of thought alone, an idea striving to realization. He is beyond a doubt Faust's aesthetic yearning, the yearning which led him to this true home of beauty, and which is now on its way to rapture in the marriage with the unsurpassable Helena.

We see then in the adventures of this strange Walpurgis Night a slow and sure development of the idea of Art—from the brutal griffin up to that picture which, as Emerson says, drives most men nobly mad.

In their search Faust and Mephistopheles are the strictest contrasts (when Faust disappears, Homunculus takes his place), and Nature sympathizes with their respective aims. Mephistopheles finds his ideal realized in the neighbourhood of the ugly products of the disturbing element of fire, Homunculus is in sympathy with the equably heaving billows, and there as Eros realizes his being. The isolation to which he has hitherto been doomed typifies the barrenness of mere thought and fancy. But if he is to *be*, he must lose his self-identity. The process of generation is first diffusion,—Eros permeates the inorganic world, and then is embodied in organic form.

Some critics have supposed that Homunculus is the embryonic form of Helena. The supposition is clearly misplaced, but there is a point of view in which it is not absurd, and Goethe would hardly have repelled the suggestion, since he could write, "Now at last I am possessed of the Alpha and Omega of all human things, the human form;" and "in the presence of antique sculpture one becomes more than one's ordinary self; one feels that the noblest subject with which he can be occupied, is the human form."

If we would institute parallels with the old Walpurgis Night, we might note the subordinate part here played by Mephistopheles (who as a mediaeval devil is naturally out of his element), a part, however, necessary to the working-out of the story, as will appear in the sequel. The guide to the classic maze is not a blind material Will-o'-the-wisp who cannot but lead the idealist Faust perpetually astray, but an incorporeal essence, whose errant tendencies are controlled by a correct instinct, a longing for a higher phase of existence. Further, Faust is not seduced by Dead Sea apples, nor does he pause to taste unripe fruit—he never forgets the impulse which spurred him hither, and the outcome will be that he will gain his Margaret instead of losing her.

Lastly, on the old Witch-night, the gloom was never lifted, and the uncouth craggy mountains were the appropriate scenery; now, the moon rises ever higher, until at last she even pauses in the zenith, while bright rivers glide murmuring sweetly to the eternal ocean, where all is peace and joy, and where in place of the inhuman howlings of the witch-revellers the happy father welcomes his child, and the maidens beg eternal truth for their lovers, and the genius of wise progress kindly leads the longing spirit to his home, and there reigns an air of good will and pure aspiration, foreshadowing a golden era in the future of the world.

## VIII.

### THE MARRIAGE OF FAUST AND HELENA.

**I**N the second lecture of the course I stated that the publication of the first part of "Faust," in the form in which we now possess it, followed at an interval of eighteen years the issue of an important fragment of the same. The author adopted a like course with the second part of his work, the act which we are about to review this evening having been published separately in the year 1827. It then appeared in the fourth volume of the author's collected writings under the title "Helena: Classico-Romantic Phantasmagoria, Interlude in 'Faust,'" after having been previously announced in an article from Goethe's pen in his magazine, "Kunst und Alterthum."

Nine years had elapsed since the completion of the first part, and most people had come to look upon "Faust" as a finished work. It therefore seemed necessary to prepare the public mind for the author's contemplated sequel, of which a beautiful instalment was about to be presented to the world. The state-

ment in "*Kunst und Alterthum*" is so significant, that I think I cannot do better than preface my present lecture by quoting it, as translated by Carlyle in an article which has become classical, published the following year in the "*Foreign Review*."

"Faust's character, in the elevation to which latter refinement, working on the old rude tradition, has raised it, represents a man who, feeling impatient and imprisoned within the limits of mere earthly existence, regards the possession of the highest knowledge, the enjoyment of the fairest blessings, as insufficient even in the slightest degree to satisfy his longing: a spirit, accordingly, which, struggling out on all sides, ever returns the more unhappy.

"This form of mind is so accordant with our modern disposition, that various persons of ability have been induced to undertake the treatment of such a subject. My manner of attempting it obtained approval: distinguished men considered the matter, and commented on my performance; all which I thankfully observed. At the same time I could not but wonder that none of those who undertook a continuation and completion of my fragment, had lighted on the thought, which seemed so obvious, that the composition of a Second Part must necessarily elevate itself altogether away from the hampered sphere of the First, and conduct a man of such a nature into higher regions, under worthier circumstances.

“How I, for my part, had determined to essay this, lay silently before my own mind, from time to time exciting me to some progress; while, from all and each, I carefully guarded my secret, still in hope of bringing the work to the wished-for issue. Now, however, I must no longer keep back; or, in publishing my collective endeavours, conceal any further secret from the world; to which, on the contrary, I feel myself bound to submit my whole labours, even though in a fragmentary state.

“Accordingly I have resolved that the above-named piece, a smaller drama, complete within itself, but pertaining to the Second Part of ‘Faust,’ shall be forthwith presented in the first portion of my works.

“The wide chasm between that well-known dolorous conclusion of the First Part, and the entrance of an antique Grecian heroine, is not yet over-arched; meanwhile, as a preamble, my readers will accept what follows:

“The old legend tells us, and the puppet-play fails not to introduce the scene, that Faust, in his imperious pride of heart, required from Mephistopheles the love of the fair Helena of Greece; in which demand the other, after some reluctance, gratified him. Not to overlook so important a concern in our work, was a duty for us: and how we have endeavoured to discharge it, will be seen in this interlude. But what may have furnished the proximate occasion of such an

occurrence, and how, after manifold hindrances, our old magical craftsman can have found means to bring back the individual Helena, in person, out of Orcus into life, must, in this stage of the business, remain undiscovered. For the present, it is enough if our readers will admit that the real Helena may step forth, on<sup>e</sup> antique tragedy cothurnus, before her primitive abode in Sparta. We then request him to observe in what way and manner Faust will presume to court favour from this royal all-famous beauty of the world."

The chasm between the third act, thus published separately, and the conclusion of the first part, had not been bridged over—not entirely, that is, for it is more than probable that the following earlier portions of the second part were already in existence—Act I. Scene 1, part of Scene 2, Act II. Scene 1 (the first three scenes of the first act were published as a *second* fragment only one year later, 1828). What had to be written, the bridge, was all that related to the story of Helena, that is, the closing scene of the first act, Scene 2 of Act II., and the classical Walpurgis Night. Goethe had occupied himself with the *dénoûment* before he had worked out the plot—the conjuration of Helena from the shades was the problem to be solved.

I should like, however, to call your attention to a point which is at first sight rather perplexing. Of all the puzzles offered us in "Faust," that presented



in this third act is the most serious, for in this act Faust is not only, as Goethe remarks in his prefatory notice, "the man of the first part, acting on a wider stage," he ceases to be *man* at all, and becomes an *historical era*, being no other than the age of chivalry. And yet, though Faust dissolves into this impersonality, the author quietly represents his position in the "Helena" as a natural development of the first part of the tragedy, with its thorough-going individualism. We seem to be reduced to the alternative either that Goethe had gone crazy, or that there was a method in his madness which requires some trouble to comprehend, and I invite the critics (whose name is legion) who make merry over this whole Second Part, to face this dilemma. For, be it remembered, Goethe was not bound to insert his "Helena" into a second part of "Faust." It might, with a little pruning, have been offered as a distinct and self-complete dramatic poem, and yet he deliberately calls it an "interlude in 'Faust,'" and desires it to be considered as a substantial part of the drama, although the other portions had not then been worked out. If we retain our faith in the unity of the poem, relying on the author's express declaration to Wilhelm von Humboldt only a few days before his death—"It is now sixty years since the conception of 'Faust,' in its whole extent stood clearly before my mind"—if we accept this unequivocal confession, this however

must be plainly remembered, that *Faust* means three things:—(1) The *individual man*, whose course from youth to the grave is described in outline, engaging our sympathies as only the concrete and personal can; (2) The *generic man*, as we may say, or man as a developing soul, whose history is a discipline and a *lustration*,—in this aspect personages and incidents being typical of stages of spiritual progress; (3) *Humanity as a whole*, the great ages of the world—a point of view wholly confined to the Second Part, and even there only occasional, but not to be ignored if we would enter into the full spirit of the author.

Now, in the present act the first and primary aspect is insignificant. The individual drops more out of sight here for the simple reason that the stage at which the man Faust has arrived is a stage of inward effort, and the outward action, had it been portrayed, would have interested us as little as (say) Faust's ten years of academic teaching. His outward activity was diversified and striking enough at the imperial court—it will be so again; but a period has occurred in his life when the progress is invisible to the outward eye, when he is occupied in building up in his own bosom an inner world of beauty. If this stage of Faust's history is to be represented it can only be by another masquerade, in which Faust shall appear, not in *propria persona*, but under a mask, in a scene where time and space are utterly disregarded.

And this point of view once seized, all common-sense difficulties vanish. Mephistopheles has *his* disguise, Faust his—disguises not thrown off till the very end of the act. Does not Goethe himself call the "Helena" an "interlude"? Faust will be back at the emperor's court ere long—just now he has left for the breezy hills of Greece, as once Goethe himself abandoned the court of Weimar for the clear sky of Italy. If we steadily remember then that the act I am about to describe is a phantasmagoria,<sup>1</sup> we shall not stumble at the anachronisms that await us at the threshold. How, it has been asked, can the classical Walpurgis Night, the anniversary of the battle of Pharsalia, which took place B.C. 48, be followed by a scene descriptive of events immediately succeeding the Trojan war, which at the most favourable reckoning could not be put later than 1148 B.C.? Well but, my dear open-eyed critics, you must surely have forgotten that Faust has descended to the Mothers, those mysterious beings,

No space around them, place and time still less,  
dwelling in that region where

Formation, transformation,  
The eternal mind's eternal recreation,  
Forms of all creatures—there are floating free.

<sup>1</sup> A word coined towards the end of the last century to denote spirit-conjurings with the magic-lantern. See a good note in Schröder's "Commentary to Faust," 1881. *Zweiter Theil*, p. 214.

So, although Faust in the sixteenth century has arrived at Manto's door on the eve of the battle of Pharsalia, he is so dear to the sibyl,

. Who loves him who *loves the impossible*,

that she has carried him to the Hades, and here we have Helena in flesh and blood, in the bright light of day, (no longer the gloom and twilight of the long eve of search,) stepping on her native land again after the eight years of homeward wandering and the terrible ten years' siege. Menelaus is still down at the coast with his ships and warriors, and has sent on the recovered spouse with her maiden escort to prepare a sacrifice to solemnize the return.

Helena with a band of twelve captive women and their leader Panthalis stand before the closed gates of the palace of Menelaus. The queen reports the injunctions of her lord, the requisites for the solemn rite, but the omission of the offering itself seems to her very strange. However, she will leave the future to provide for itself, and ascends the steps to revisit the old home and see that all is in order. Presently, however, she returns with manifest terror in her countenance, alarming the chorus. She then relates that, entering the large hall, by the light of the glimmering ashes she perceived a gigantic figure cowering on the ground, who ran to bar her progress when she proceeded towards the interior apartments,

apparently the old stewardess, but exhibiting a face of the intensest ugliness, haggard, with bloodshot eyes. The description is soon completed by the appearance of the figure itself between the door-posts.

Altercation ensues between one half of the chorus speaking singly, and the Phorkyad-like stewardess, interrupted presently by Helena, who declares that their ghastly descriptions have so bewildered her that she begins to doubt whether she is really here before her husband's palace, or among the ghosts of Orcus. She bids the stewardess speak "some word of sense" to soothe her agitated mind. Then in alternato couplets the history of Helena is sketched from the time when Hercules first bore her off at the age of ten, until she wedded as wraith the phantasmal shape of Achilles.

HELENA.

A phantom I myself to him a phantom bound,  
A dream it was—this e'en the very words declare,  
I faint, and to myself a phantom I become.

(She sinks into the arms of the semi-chorus.)

The chorus then reproach the ugly one for helping by her recitals to destroy their mistress. Helena, however, revives, and stands among them again with unclouded sense, as the sun after a storm.

It is not easy to penetrate the author's meaning in this bizarre episode. We are tempted to suppose an

allusion to some allegorical or mythological treatment of the heroes and heroines of the *Iliad*. The sudden faintings and slow revivals obviously suggest the temporary veiling of the sun (or moon) by a cloud. Beyond that, however, it may be the various stories of Helen's union signify the frequent attempts to grasp the spirit of the Beautiful, the last attempt of all, the marriage with the perfect manly nature (Achilles) being the most impracticable. Such a total fusion of the Beautiful were only possible in phantom-form, and this phantom-union suggests to Helena that even beauty itself is perhaps phantasmal.

I faint, and to myself a phantom I become.

But the embodiment of supreme loveliness speedily recovers self-confidence—the sun shines forth again in noonday splendour—and the immediate present alone occupies the mind.

The sacrificial preparations are being delayed. But Phorkyas says all is prepared within—censer and sharp axe.

PHORKYAS.

Now the destined victim show !

HELENA.

That to me the king disclosed not.

PHORKYAS.

Spake it not ? O doleful word !

HELENA.

What the sorrow that o'erpowers thee?

PHORKYAS.

(Queen, the offering art thou!

Helena is to be sacrificed to appease the awful wrath of Menelaus. For he who has once possessed the total beautiful will never share its possession with another. The queen shall perish smitten as a noble victim, her handmaids dying an ignominious death on the cross-beam. Phorkyas claps her hands, when a troop of dwarfs appear to arrange the ceremonial. There is a way of escape, however, which Phorkyas after a rambling story discloses. While Menelaus has been scouring the seas—twenty years he has been away, leaving his home to ruin—a tribe from the far north has settled on the neighbouring hills and erected an impregnable fortress. If she choose to put herself under the protection of the new-comers there is salvation for her and her maidens—otherwise inevitable death.

Menelaus is the heedless Greek nation which did not guard its treasures as it should. Instead of staying at home and keeping bright its unsurpassable wealth, it entered on the career of conquest, and left itself exposed to the incursions of an alien race, with less rich natural endowments, but greater power of endurance, and more foresight.

Phorkyas describes the new architecture, the more humane warfare, the novel physiognomy. The chief is cheerful, well-formed, and prudent, as few among the Greeks.

Whilst Helen hesitates, the trumpets of the approaching Menelaus are heard. The malicious Phorkyas heightens the intensity of the moment by words of pretended glee. There follows a brief pause ; then Helen surrenders herself to the new destiny. She fears an evil fate, and yet she will follow the repulsive guide to the strange stronghold. Other things she has a presentiment of, which she will not reveal. The band of Trojan women are simply delighted beyond measure at the prospect of the safety of a new-walled Ilium.

And now a mist rises, veiling gradually the whole scene. The sacred Eurotas fades, the fair swans—the night seems to come on. The chorus become invisible to each other ; they seem to be hurried swiftly along, and yet without any conscious effort. Whither are they speeding ? Is that Hermes with the golden staff before them, waving them on to the joyless ghostly Hades ?—At last the vapour rolls away, and they find themselves surrounded by dark forbidding walls. They have been then entrapped into a prison !

It is the inner court of a mediæval castle. Helen seeks their guide, but she has vanished. Soon the



gloom of the scene is relieved by a troop of fair-haired youths who descend the steps, an endless *cortège*, bearing carpets and a splendid throne with overhanging canopy for the queenly guest. And at last, dressed in the costume of a knight of the Middle Ages, with slow and dignified gait FAUST descends the staircase. Faust is accompanied by a man in fetters. It is the watchman of the tower, set there to report anything happening beyond the castle walls; and yet, though always hitherto prompt in duty, he has failed to announce the approach of the august visitor. He deserves death, which Helena herself must decree. Before pronouncing sentence, the queen of Beauty begs him to speak in his own defence. Lynceus, the warder, then declares that as he was looking for the dawning light in the accustomed east, lo! the sun rose in the south; thereafter vapours and mists, which disappearing, the lovely queen stepped forth and so fascinated him that he was transfixed in admiration, and forgot the warder's duty. Helena cannot condemn him, as she is herself the cause of his neglect, and Faust himself, no less smitten, can do no other. Lynceus is set free, but soon returns with chests of treasures to be laid at Helen's feet. Lynceus reports how they have through long years been won, and when his story is finished, Faust bids him bear away the load—it is only a sample of what now belongs to the queen,—the castle and all its con-

tents are henceforth hers. As for Lynceus, he is free from blame, but he is not thanked for his pains.

Lynceus, the warder of the tower, is the man of intellect of the barbarian nations who changed the face of the world on the decay of the Roman Empire, and from Byzantium to Britain introduced, though often with a rough hand, the higher order of social and religious life. As the Church was the guardian of intellectual treasures, we must look to it for the abstraction which Lynceus personifies. Keen-sighted its best sons were beyond a doubt, contemptuous of possessions which attracted coarser minds, heaping up only the unfading gems of thought and wisdom. Every morning for centuries they saw the sun rising in its wonted place over the Palestinian hills, but at last came a day when they were puzzled with a strange phenomenon, when the luminary seemed to rise in the south, when the glory of Greece, though at first in misty outlines, appeared before the unprepared watchman, when a shock was given to the world's ordinary ways, and the monk forsook his school divinity and was lost in admiration at the beauties of classic art and literature. It was the Renaissance—blinding by excessive light.

Helena now bids Faust ascend beside her. She feels she can no longer retain her independence, that her fate is henceforth linked with his. And the language of Lynceus has so charmed her that she

would learn it from Faust's lips. Lynceus, it will be observed, has spoken in rhyme, and this is the first occasion in the act where rhyme has been employed. Hitherto the metres have been all classical, and classical the style of the chorus still remains till there occurs another change of scene. But Helen now practices with Faust the new ornament, and finds the speech of her entertainer exceedingly pleasing. The chorus describes the growing affection of Faust and Helena. These latter hardly know whether they are awake or dreaming—Helena thought life was over, and yet she feels new strength and a new trust, but Faust will have no reference to past and future.

Being in duty, though a moment held.

But a jarring note now interrupts their bliss. Phorkyas impetuously enters, reproving this inopportune dalliance. Sterner work awaits them. Menelaus is close at hand. Faust must to arms, must not only win his bride, but show himself able to keep her. There are heard signals and explosions (presumably allusion to modern warfare, gunpowder, &c.), and preceded by martial music an army crosses the stage. The leaders come forward to receive orders from Faust, who proceeds to allot them (in anticipation of victory) the conquered territory. Germans, Goths, Franks, Saxons, Normans—to each a district is assigned, which they are to conquer, govern, and improve. The new learning must be mastered by the

modern nations, by each in its own way. Their provinces are distinct, but before each lies a path of high duty. The chorus praise the prudence of the chief, for culture is not something to be passively appropriated—it must be grasped firmly, and surrounded with impenetrable ramparts, for unrespecting Vandals are ever near to destroy the fairest inheritance.

And in the midst of all, surrounded by these warriors, in the fairest idyllic land, where Pan Lycaeus once kept his peaceful flock and sweetly piped the livelong day, in Arcadia, there shall be the home of the prince himself and his bride. The shrine of the beautiful must be in a land flowing with milk and honey, where no chilling blasts of care can enter, where the jarring sounds of polemic wrangling are never heard.

This home of the beautiful is really unlocalized, although perhaps Italy was partly in the author's mind, for, unless the Italians be represented by the Goths, that nation is left out of the distribution. But in truth, in this description of classic art we must not omit to comprehend Italy under the more suggestive name of Greece. When we think of the classic world Italy and Greece are one—but Greece is ever uppermost in thought, as Italy for the most part offered only an echo of the old beauty.

We have now reached the climax of this act, with Faust taking his seat beside Helena. The ancient world has blended with the mediæval. The scene now

is entirely changed. Groves and arbours are seen fringing vast rocky caverns. The chorus alone are visible, sleeping scattered here and there. They have been sleeping a long time—longer than Phorkyas, who now appears, can tell—but it is time to awake them. Although they have hardly rubbed their eyes, they ask for some exciting story, for they are tired of gazing on these familiar rocks. (The ages are for the most part dreary enough to the mind dating from the golden age of Greece.) But Phorkyas thinks he has something unheard-of to relate. Within these mysterious caverns their lady and her lord have been spending many happy hours, and a son has been born to them, a precocious child, a little Phoebus, so quick and impulsive that he is at once the delight and fear of his parents. Where he has got them no one knows, but arrayed in beautiful garments, with a lyre in his hand, he is leaping nimbly from crag to crag, a flaming aureole surrounding his head. The chorus are not so astonished as Phorkyas—has he never heard of Hermes, son of Maia, who came into being at once perfect butterfly, who tripped up gods and goddesses, unapproachably skilful from his very birth?

Exquisite music resounds from the cave. This the chorus must perforce listen to, such strains they certainly have never heard before. The so-called music of the ancients never drew tears from eyes as this does. Phorkyas exclaims :—

Hark, those notes so sweetly sounding ;  
Cast aside your fabled lore :  
Gods, in olden time abounding—  
Let them go ! their day is o'er.  
None will comprehend *your* singing ;  
Nobler theme the age requires :  
From the heart must flow, upspringing,  
What to touch the heart aspires.

Helen, Faust, and their boy Euphorion now appear. In alternate stanzas of four lines Euphorion, Helena, Faust, and the chorus sing rejoicingly the happiness of the blissful trio. Faust and Helena seem to have attained the goal of their existence. But now the lines grow shorter, to indicate the more rapid movements of the impetuous youth. Euphorion cannot rest, he longs to spring higher, exciting the fond parents' alarm. The boy heeds them so far as to stop his climbing for awhile, and in its stead winds among the maiden-chorus, dragging them forward to the dance. An intricate dance commences, the chorus expressing unbounded admiration at the movements of the graceful youth. A pause—and then Euphorion chases the chorus individually, urging them to flee that he may have the full delight of conquest. After a mad chase he catches the wildest of the band. But a strength resides in her equal to his own, and while striving to hold her she flashes into flame, which plays around his head.

Euphorion, shaking the flames off, now springs up

the rocks. He hears, though others do not, the sound of coming war. Higher and higher he ascends, appearing to the admiring chorus like a young warrior in glittering armour. Higher still he goes.

CHORUS.

O hallowed Poesie,  
Heavenward still soareth she !  
Shine on, thou brightest star,  
Farther and still more far !  
Yet us she still doth cheer :  
Ever her voice to hear,  
Joyful we are.—S.

Helen and Faust lament the change to the warlike, they foresee the direful end, but Euphorion whirled on by an irresistible impulse does not heed them.

And hear ye thunders on the ocean,  
And thunders roll from tower and wall ;  
And host with host, in fierce commotion,  
See mixing at the trumpet's call.  
And to die in strife  
Is the law of life,  
That is certain once for all.

HELENA, FAUST, AND CHORUS.

What a horror ! spoken madly !  
Will thou die ? Then what must I ?

EUPHORION.

Shall I view it, safe and gladly ?  
No ! to share it will I hie.

HELENA, FAUST, AND CHORUS.

Fatal are such haughty things ;  
War is for the stout.

EUPHORION.

Ha !—and a pair of wings  
Folds itself out !  
Thither ! I must ! I must !  
'Tis my best to fly !

[He casts himself into the air ; his garments support him for a moment ; his head radiates, a train of light follows him.]

CHORUS.

Icarus ! earth and dust !  
O, woe ! thou mount'st too high.

[A beautiful youth rushes down at the feet of the parents ; you fancy you recognize in the dead a well-known form ; but the bodily part instantly disappears ; the gold crownlet mounts like a comet to the sky ; coat, mantle, and lyre are left lying.]<sup>1</sup>

Euphorion (from the depths) implores his mother to follow him. Then the chorus, in a deeper strain than has yet left their lips, sing a pregnant dirge. After which the music, which has appropriately accompanied all the songs since the entrance of Euphorion, ceases. It is time for Helena herself to depart. She encloses Faust in a last embrace, her corporeal part disappears, her garment and veil remaining in Faust's arms. Phorkyas, who now steps

<sup>1</sup> (Freely) translated by Carlyle, "Foreign Review," No. 2, 1828.



forward, bids him retain these—they are not the goddess, it is true, but they are godlike.

The garments of Helena dissolve into clouds ; they close around Faust, and, bearing him aloft, disappear. Phorkyas takes up the costume and lyre of Euphorion, declaring that there is enough left to fit out a whole generation of poets.

Panthalis, the grave leader of the chorus, now urges her companions to follow their queen to the nether world, but they are reluctant to quit the bright sunlight, and twitter like bats around the asphodel meadows. The chorus-leader finely says :—

Who hath no name achieved, nor at the noble aims,  
Belongs but to the elements ; so hence, begone !  
My vehement desire is with my queen to be ;  
Not merit 'tis alone, fidelity as well,  
Secure in yonder spheres, the individual life.

The rest of the chorus fulfil the destiny they prefer—

Back are we given now to the daylight ;  
Certes, persons no more,  
That feel we, that know we ;  
Nathless return we never to Hades !  
Nature, eternally living,  
Claims in us spirits,  
We in her, a title undoubted.—S.

Then in four groups the chorus sing their new natural life—the first as spirits of the trees, the second of echoing rocks, the third of streams, the fourth of sloping vineyards. The curtain falls. Phorkyas,

stationed in the proscenium, rises to a giant height, removes his mask and veil, and appears as—*Mephistopheles*.

Goethe derived the marriage of Faust and Helena from the old story-book. According to the original legend, Faust required Mephistopheles to procure him Helen of Troy for wife. This was complied with, and a son was born who was named Justus Faustus. "This child predicted to him things which were about to happen in different countries. When Faust died, the mother and child disappeared." The name Euphorion is taken from Pausanias, who states that he was the dream-child of the dream-union of Achilles and Helen. Ptolemaeus Hephaestion adds the circumstance of his being winged, not unlikely an invention of his own, according to Preller.

Wilhelm Scherer seeks to bring Goethe's treatment of the story into relation with the famous myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Laying hold of Goethe's reference, in a conversation with Eckermann, to a contemplated scene in Hades, wherein Persephone should be moved to tears by Faust pleading for a restoration of Helen to the light, he imagines a change in the author's plan, the original design being in close correspondence with the ancient Orpheus legend. As the restoration of Eurydice to the upper air was coupled with the condition that Orpheus should not

glance back at her till he had reached the light of day, so Scherer imagines Goethe intended a condition should be annexed to the boon granted to Faust, namely, that Helena should remain on earth so long as she was wholly oblivious that she had once died and was now merely a clothed shade. In this way he accounts for Helena's swoon when Phorkyas, in an early part of the scene, comes very close to the fatal suggestion of her phantom-existence—

'Tis also said from out the hollow shadow-realm  
Achilles, passion fired, hath joined himself to thee,  
Whom he hath loved of old, 'gainst all resolves of Fate—

and supposes that her final departure was to have been achieved by the full recollection of her merely quasi-substantiality. The Byron episode, however (he supposes), diverted the author's thoughts from this *dénoûment*, and Euphron merely calls to his mother to follow him to the shades, without it being plainly indicated why her time has come. (See "Deutsche Rundschau" for May, 1884.)

The Middle Age once actually wedded to classic beauty, the world rapidly advances, and the child of modern art is soon born. But this child does not represent the harmonious union of the parents,—it partakes now of the nature of one, now of that of the other. The tendency is too ideal, and it is regardless of the wise law that strength comes only from touching the earth. What would have been the end of Eupho-

rion had the third act been written all at once, we do not know, for Goethe paused in his execution, and refused to reveal the sequel he had originally intended. For, while the latter part of the poem was still only in draft, there came the tidings of the attempt of the Greeks to throw off the Turkish yoke, and the exciting news that a famous English poet was renouncing his peaceful vocation to throw in his lot with the party of revolution. From that moment the poem took a new turn, and the boy Euphorion appeared in the unmistakable shape of Lord Byron. The brilliant promise of that poet, the lawless career, the call to arms, the sudden end, are unmistakable, and the dirge of the chorus well expresses the fate of this baffled genius:—

Scarce we venture to bewail thee,  
Envyng we sing thy fate :  
Did sunshine cheer, or storm assail thee,  
Song and heart were fair and great.

Earthly fortune was thy dower,  
Lofty lineage, ample might,  
Ah, too early lost, thy flower  
Withered by untimely blight !  
Glance was thine the world discerning,  
Sympathy with every wrong,  
Woman's love for thee still yearning,  
And thine own enchanting song.

Yet the beaten path forsaking,  
Thou didst run into the snare :  
So with law and usage breaking,  
On thy wilful course didst fare ;

Yet at last high thought has given  
To thy noble courage weight,  
For the loftiest thou hast striven—  
It to win was not thy fate.

Who does win it? Unreplying,  
Destiny the question hears,  
When the bleeding people lying,  
Dumb with grief, no cry uprears!—  
Now new songs chant forth, in sorrow  
Deeply bowed lament no more;  
Them the earth brings forth to-morrow,  
As she brought them forth of yore!—S.

But though the fate of Byron fixed the termination of this portion of the story, a termination doubtless satisfactory to the author, for it relieved him of a serious difficulty, we must not credit Byron with the whole description. The end significantly runs: "*We imagine that in the dead we recognize a well-known form, yet suddenly the corporeal part vanishes, the aureole rises, &c.*" Our imagination is partly right and partly wrong. Euphorion, as the child of Faust and Helena, of classic and romantic culture, cannot surely have a complete illustration in Byron. Byron could hardly be called a type of this union—modern poetry required some better-proportioned supporter. If we search for the fruit of the blending of antiquity and the Middle Age, the full ripe bloom of modern poetry, there is none worthy to be so specified but Goethe himself. Goethe must have had an inkling of

this, but he naturally hesitated to give it form, while Byron's sudden death brought its fresh suggestions, and permitted him, without marring the effect of his work, to pay this homage to the unhappy bard. Goethe's countrymen have never felt any difficulty in admitting the justness of this tribute to the memory of Byron—we Englishmen find it harder. The truth is, we have never sufficiently valued, and hardly ever understood, this Titan of our literature. The ethical bias of our nation (invaluable in its proper place, but perverting our artistic judgment to an extraordinary degree) makes us constantly confuse a man's character with his work, and leads us, if the life offend our rigid standard, to condemn his labours. Two of the greatest names in our literature, Shelley and Byron, have been thus maltreated, and the consequence has been that for appreciation of the latter at least we must go to other countries. But even when ethical considerations have not been introduced, the poet Byron has not had his due. It has been for some time the fashion to deny him rank both as thinker and literary artist—but it is a dull perception which can make that mistake. Think what a master-mind that must have been which could write "Manfred" after only having read the few fragments of Shelley's translation of "Faust"—and he must be an incurable Philistine who cannot detect both profound thought and literary splendour in "Cain" and "Don

Juan." But genius alone can fully estimate genius, and we must turn to Goethe's own words, to learn how high our poet stands among the immortals. He says: "That which I call *invention* I find more pronounced in him than in any other man in the world." Eckermann reports: "They then talked about the necessity of my learning English, and Goethe earnestly advised me to do so, particularly on account of Lord Byron, saying that a character of such eminence had never existed before, and probably would never come again." "The discourse then turned upon the Italian poet Torquato Tasso, and his resemblance to Lord Byron, when Goethe could not conceal the superiority of the Englishman in spirit, grasp of the world, and productive power." "He is a great talent; a born talent, and I never saw the true poetical power greater in any man than in him. In the apprehension of external objects and a clear penetration into past situations he is quite as great as Shakespeare." "The English," said he, "may think of Byron as they please; but this is certain, that they can show no poet who is to be compared to him. He is different to all the others, and for the most part greater." And a word for all ears—our moral art-critics in particular—"Byron's boldness, wilfulness, and grandiose manner, is it not an element of development? We must avoid seeking that element exclusively in what is decisively pure and ethical. All that is

*great, as soon as we appreciate it, furthers our development."*

Faust's aesthetic training ends with the death of Helena. Thenceforward it is the garment of the beautiful that must suffice him. His sphere will in future be a widely different one, but the close contact with the beautiful will have so renewed his being that henceforth his commonest action will not lack an indefinable grace and elevation.

The chorus which until the appearance of Euph Orion never lost the traces of its origin, from that moment acquires a varnish of modern polish—in the dirge indeed rising to a height which Goethe himself admitted could only be justified as a poet's license. But this elevation is of short duration—the leader alone will follow the fortunes of her mistress even to the end; its members are resolved into elemental forces. A piece of Goethe's creed here peeps out. It was his belief that immortality was only for a few who by force of character had earned for themselves a true individuality. There is the germ of the immortal in all—a germ, however, which may never mature. Those only who have willed themselves into personal being will persist after bodily death. So the giddy chorus, who have been for the most part echoes, who have never realized their essential existence—they will mingle with Nature again, and be recognized only as the animating principles of woods and waters.



They represent that new spirit of the moderns which suffuses Nature with life and feeling. Nature is no longer looked upon as by the ancients, as the temporary abode of independent demigods, a playground for individualized nymphs and fauns, still less as inert and dead, wholly alien to the life of the human world, as in the passional poetry of the Minnesingers and the Christian Middle Age in general, but as pervaded by a vital and spiritual principle, as only the moderns, our own Shelley, for example, could describe.

The concluding songs of the fourth group are of a more doubtful character. There seems to be something more in their rhyming than a description of the destiny of a last division of the Trojan maidens. The revel of the wine-god cannot be without its meaning, and yet that meaning is hard to find. Have we here a foreshadowing of the coming act? Do Dionysus and the satyrs play the same part as Pan in the carnival-masquerade of the first act? If so, there will be a certain parallelism between the two interludes. As there the golden age passed by gradual declination to riot and revolution, so now, after the epiphany of the beautiful, the modern world goes the way of all things, even the best, and an era of peace and order is succeeded by clamour and license, and the eternal tale is repeated of effete Roman empires and enervated civilizations. This must be the explanation, for, lo! immediately thereafter appears the spirit of denial and

destruction in his own person. Mephistopheles removes the mask of the ugly Phorkyas.

And now it is time to review this wonderful third act as a whole. The first part of it, together with the classical Walpurgis Night, is Goethe's homage to the grandeur of ancient art. Goethe began life as a strong Romanticist. The classical world for some time left him cold. From these early years resulted the iron-handed Goetz and the early scenes of "Faust." But under the influence of Schiller and the fruitful journey to Italy the romantic lost its hold, and he had for a period an eye for the classical alone. It is strange to find the man, who was once all a-glow at the marvellous Strasburg Cathedral, writing of a Roman temple: "This is indeed something other than our cringing saints of the finical Gothic spirit, piled one over another on brackets and corbels,—something other than our tobacco-pipe columns, pointed turrets, and flowery pinnacles. From these, thank God, I am now eternally delivered!" He is inebriated by the antique beautiful. It was like coming out of Cimmerian gloom and a stifling atmosphere to emerge into the sunny brightness of this inartificial Greece, this fresh air of the blue Aegean. Schiller, who had but little of the real romantic spirit in him, fanned the flame, and Iphigenia and the Helena are products of this enthusiasm. "Let us," he says, "study Molière,

let us study Shakespeare, but above all things the old Greeks, and always the Greeks." Elsewhere, "Clearness of vision, cheerfulness, receptivity, and easy grace of expression are the qualities which delight us; and now when we affirm that we find all these in the genuine Grecian works, achieved in the noblest material, the most proportioned form, with certainty and completeness of execution, we shall be understood if we always refer to them as a basis and a standard. Let each be a Grecian in his own way, but let him *be* one."<sup>1</sup>

One of the firstfruits of this enthusiasm was the "Helena." Notice how lifelike her impersonation is, at least in the early part of the act. We could not have the old times brought before us more vividly by Homer or Sophokles. And in reference to the setting of our poem, how artistic, I may remark, the advance to the climax of the third act from the Walpurgis Night! That obscure night was a long preparation for this clear day. Even the form of Galatea was somewhat hazy in the moonlight, though the moon was full; but now when the sun has risen we have the real queen of beauty herself, the human Helena.

But Goethe, although he doubtless was entranced, for a time by the free Grecian world, could not always

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Bayard Taylor. Notes to his "Translation of Second Part of Faust," 1871, pp. 427, 445.

dwell in that naïve region. He was too much a child of his time for that. The old love drew him irresistibly again, and the romantic spirit regained its power, just as in the world's history the cathedral, with its solemn dimlit aisles, succeeded to the open and artless Doric temple. While Helena and her maidens have been lost in the mist of time a new world has been created utterly alien to the old naturalism, more serious, less rounded perhaps, rugged and uncouth in many respects, but attracting by an air of mystery which held the reason captive. The Middle Age is unmistakably an advance on Greece and Rome; though lacking elements which had immortalized the latter, it had a depth which showed it was a higher expression than its predecessor of the world-spirit. Those elements were, however, to be added in due time, and when the European horizon was widened by the enterprises of explorers of every kind the forgotten glories of Greece were once more brought to the light, having the effect described in the poem in the case of the warder Lynceus. For a time all was "Pagan"—Pagan kings, Pagan popes, Pagan art, and the old fathers of the Church were set aside for Homer and Euripides. The influence spread, widened conceptions, which had plenty of depth, but considerably lacked in breadth, and from the union grew the culture of modern Europe. Greece herself had become degraded, or the world would never have

rejoiced as over a re-found child. This is expressed in the poem by the cutting words :—

Drive from these walls, my voice obeying,  
King Menelaus back to sea ;  
There let him *sacking and waylaying*  
*Fulfil his will and destiny.*

Such had Greece become, a land of cutthroats and good-for-nothings. Its spirit alone was left to be appreciated by barbarians whom it once would have spurned.

The harmonious existence which for a time is led by Faust and Helena is painted in somewhat rosy colours. I will venture to suggest that here we have a touch of the *individual* aspect of our Faust again. This is the first and only time in the course of the poem where the family relation is described. As we have everything else in this all-sided poem, I will suggest that here we have a tribute paid to this form of social experience, although we must not carry the hint too far—but the joys of Faust and Helena have a touch of the common human, and though the “wife” be only a phantom, the marriage may be set over against the older tragedy as an ideal picture of what might have been had all gone well with the earthly life.

Goethe is reported by Eckermann to have declared Euphorion and the boy-charioteer in the first act to

be representatives of one and the same idea. "In him is personified poetry, which is bound to neither time, place, nor person." And there are those who with a right instinct find in "Faust" an expression of Goethe's own nature; who see in the boy-charioteer liberated by Karl August from official life the story of Goethe's development, in the flight of Homunculus the Italian journey and quest of the classic beautiful, in the boy Euphorion the final expression of his blended classic and romantic culture. If we strip off all personal relations, however, we have certainly in Euphorion the symbolical fruit of Faust's aesthetic discipline, products necessary for development, but to be left behind on the life-journey. Euphorion first vanishes, then Helena. Faust was not always to remain at the stage of Art. It was necessary, if he was to be elevated, to be imbued with its spirit, but the highest Art is the art of life, and that no dallying with the Beautiful will ever afford. Faust would have been no picture of the normal man had Euphorion lived, and had Helena forborne to follow him.

Reviving Greece under the War of Liberation offered the occasion of a fine close to the career of this child of ancient and mediaeval art. The re-birth of Greece (though, alas! mainly a dream) was a fine swan-song for the boy born of such parents. And the fate of the poet Euphorion is a fitting preliminary to Faust's own future. The child, though so young,

rises higher than his sire, for when the latter implores him to stay in the happy valley, and content himself with the passive enjoyment of beauty, he indignantly asks:—

From afar shall I behold it ?

No! I'll *share* the care and need.

And Phorkyas—and Mephistopheles? Well, the old enemy has been present through the whole business. This strange being, puzzling us ever by his Janus-like aspect, a mystery to the very end of the chapter, always leaving us in doubt whether he be imp or angel. He comes in the mask of the most appalling ugliness, frightens the Trojan maids out of their wits, and even disturbs the serenity of the queen of Beauty herself, and yet he is the good genius who saves her from destruction at the hands of her inappreciative spouse. Who or what is he or she (for the gender even is not plain)? Well, she is here, I take it, that shrewd spirit running through the ages, which priest and prophet ban in vain, that protecting genius of the truly real, which sees to it that there shall be no excess unbalanced, that there shall be invariable compensation. There is malice in her twinkle, but there is a latent goodwill behind which cannot be suppressed.

Many of the piquant aspects of Mephistopheles were derived from a friend of the author named

Merck, an extraordinary fellow, who invariably took the opposite side to himself in a discussion, who laid himself out especially to take down all tall talkers, and who always gave Goethe to understand that he (as Emerson says of the Americans) had not water, but a little gas on the brain. This was the provoking friend who said of "Goetz von Berlichingen," "It is good-for-nothing, poor stuff, but still print it, by all means print it." Although such an unmitigated cynic, Goethe had a real affection for the man, and something of the same sort of liking we cannot avoid entertaining for Mephistopheles. (Merck's end, by the way, was as contradictory as his life. Thinking he must become bankrupt, though his affairs were by no means desperate, he denied his own existence by blowing out his brains.)

It is Phorkyas-Mephistopheles then who contrives this union of the mediaeval and the antique. She would not let the saints retain their self-satisfied independence, and the Christian world had to be reconciled with the Pagan.

And it is Phorkyas-Mephistopheles, too, it appears, who nurses the bantling which springs from this union. While the maids are dozing\* she is the only one who attends upon the king and queen of Beauty, she the incarnate Ugly. While the boy sings his entrancing lay, she retreats, however, into the background. Her office is temporarily suspended. It is



always her function to unite through denial; the positive has no being without her—definition arises through negation. She was not at hand while the boy Euphorion aspired (and the more the pity); had she been present the lad would not have been dashed a corpse on the stony rock. The last words she says to her master in this act are:—

We meet again, far, far away from here.

Faust soars away on the cloud-mantle of Helena.

A chasm of thought intervenes between the present and the following act. With a loving hand Goethe wrote the "Helena" and the last scene of the classical Walpurgis Night. Here the author was at home—here he was all enthusiasm;—this was his life-element. Now comes angularity, conflict, tottering ago.

We have reached the height of egoistic joy. No sublimer form of personal enjoyment could be found than that which arises from the contemplation and pursuit of art, a pursuit which stands to a few always for a religion. But Faust could not fulfil his mission by pronouncing now the fatal words, "Stay, for it is so fair." There is a loftier steep yet to be climbed, a grander peak yet to be reached, a more rarified air still to be breathed, and Faust has hardly yet crossed the meridian of life. Though the incidents will be briefly told, a long arduous journey lies before him,

and he will not catch sight of the beautiful again till very many years have passed, but then it will be no corporeal beauty, no classic Helen, but a beauty which with difficulty finds its expression in material symbol.

## IX.

### FAUST AS PRACTICAL DREAMER.

**H**ELENA'S garments dissolved into clouds have borne Faust northwards to his native land ; and we find him now, after an undefined period of airy wandering, stepping from his light car on to the top of a high jagged mountain. The legacy of the lost goddess can support him no longer—the mission of pure art is over—a rougher lot is in store for the traveller,—Arcadia has grown dim, and the land of cold hard duty must be the next scene of Faust's activity. No sooner has Faust emerged from the parted vapour than the cloud-masses reunite, and in ever-changing shapes surge eastward. As he strains his sight to trace the shifting outlines to the last, they seem to present the image of a colossal woman reclining on sun-tipped pillows, a Juno, a Helena. The superb figure is gradually dissolved again, and settles in the far east, resembling vast and formless hills of ice. A strip of cloud yet hovers over him,

cooling his hot temples. And now that too rises, and draws together, assuming a shape less grand, but more lifelike, not melting again into the formless, but ascending into the pure ether, the picture of a far older glory, but whose memory is still warm.

Down-gazing on the deepest solitudes below,  
I tread deliberately this summit's lonely edge,  
Relinquishing my cloudy car, which hither bore  
Me softly through the shining day o'er land and sea.  
Unscattered, slowly moved, it separates from me.  
Off eastward strives the mass with rounded, rolling march :  
And strives the eye, amazed, admiring, after it.  
In motion it divides, in wave-like, changeful guise ;  
Yet seems to shape a figure.—Yes ! mine eyes not err !—  
On sun-illumin'd pillows beautifully reclined,  
Colossal, truly, but a god-like woman-form,  
I see ! The like of Juno, Leda, Helena,  
Majestically lovely, floats before my sight !  
Ah, now 'tis broken ! Towering broad and formlessly,  
It rests along the east like distant icy hills,  
And shapes the grand significance of fleeting days.  
Yet still there clings a light and delicate band of mist  
Around my breast and brow, caressing, cheering me.  
Now light, delayingly, it soars and higher soars,  
And folds together.—Cheats me an ecstatic form,  
As early-youthful, long-foregone and highest bliss ?  
The first glad treasures of my deepest heart break forth ;  
Aurora's love, so light of pinion, is its type,  
The swiftly-felt, the first, scarce-comprehended glance,  
Outshining every treasure, when retained and held.  
Like Spiritual Beauty mounts the gracious Form,  
Dissolving not, but lifts itself through ether far,  
And from my inner being bears the best away.—T.

This opening soliloquy of the fourth act is the only bit of genuine poetry with which we shall be refreshed for some time. Its metrical form is the classic trimeter, now employed for the last time, the inspiration of an elder art having done its work—the substantial thought full of vital significance. Helena was a dream-shape, a creature of imagination, but though only phantasmal in embodiment, devotion to her was the indispensable antecedent to recognition of the worth of Margaret. The charm of the latter was exerted through sense, and her highest influence in life reached no further than to excite fickle moods of aspiration, but Helen charmed the soul. Emancipated from the confining limits of material embodiment, she could only be grasped by the arms of fancy, and her admirer was freed from the effect, debasing to an unregenerated nature, of actual possession.

All this and much more is indicated in this pregnant monologue. It is the same cloud that is now Helena, now Margaret—the worthiest in Margaret was identical with that symbolized by Helena,—but see the fates of the respective clouds. Helena has no permanent existence—her existence endures no longer than the aspirant's *need*. When Helena has imbued Faust with the spirit of heroic effort she fades into the formless, and becomes a thing of the past, cold and rigid. But now the real wife first shines in her full beauty; the best in Faust's nature has been

evoked by the ideal love, and best can only see the best.

Like Spiritual Beauty mounts the gracious Form,  
Dissolving not, but lifts itself through ether far,  
And from my inner being bears the best away.

We have now arrived at the third crisis of our hero's story. The first life-period was marked by private and subjective *self*-satisfaction, coarse or refined—that was its end and aim. The second had been subjective-objective, that is to say, Faust had recognized a something above and beyond himself as the goal of endeavour, enjoyment being envisaged rather as means than end. At the same time, this aim cannot be pronounced truly disinterested. Arcadia is not the world, contemplation of ideals no substitute for worthy action, rather the preparation for such. The third stage has now to be entered upon. Faust must finally recognize that he is not an *independent whole*, but a *member* of a social organism. His life-problem cannot be fully solved by his continuing to dwell in secluded Arcadia with his beautiful mistress, although she be godlike, a spiritual ideal. This is the creed of Goethe himself, supremè artist! We may be sure that it was no slight exercise of will that brought Faust to this jagged mountain-peak. Faust would at one time have been content to live and die on poetic soil. He would fain have kept the child

Euphorion for ever, and it was not he that deserted Helena, but Helena that forsook him. It was a necessity beyond his shaping that drove him out of his Eden of aesthetic joy, and flung him down here among the crags of the bitter actual, and would not let him feast longer on roses and rapture, but sternly bade him share the common bread with his fellow-men.

A seven-leagued boot now trips up, soon succeeded by its fellow—then the belated owner. Faust has already got very far from the land whose decaying glory Phorkyas lingered to witness, and the comrade has required a giant's boots to overtake him. The latter having done their office are discarded, and stride onward alone—Mephistopheles will need no artificial aid to keep up with his companion for the future. He is on his own ground again, and Faust will not wander far for the term of his natural life. Mephistopheles cannot but wonder at his friend's taste. It is familiar ground enough to himself, but to the dainty Faust what a choice! This is an old volcanic mountain—it once formed the floor of a certain fiery locality, but in the whirligig of time things have changed places, and the over-crowded denizens of the hot interior have thrown these fragments up to daylight, to get a little more elbow-room. Faust cuts short Mephistopheles' geognostic disquisition—he is in no mood for testimonies of the rocks, whether from the diabolic or the scientific point of view.

To me are mountain-masses grandly dumb.

He has acquired a disrelish for the spasmodic and the convulsive. The repose of classic beauty has taught him to revere only the well-proportioned. Nature he thinks must be like Art. (A poet's blunder, I may take the liberty of remarking by the way. Art undoubtedly seeks the proportioned, but not Nature. Nature is to human apprehension the chaotic, and Goethe went astray in his science just because he failed to see the contrast between Art and Nature. He resisted the Plutonic theory because it did not harmonize with his own controlled thought and feeling. But it is reason, not force, which strives after law and order. The earth's corrugated surface may not have been the work of erupting devils, but the eruption must be admitted none the less.)

The Devil, however, does not really care for Nature—he is the crafty enemy of the little world-god; and Mephistopheles now persuasively addresses the man Faust, as once Satan the Lord's Anointed on the Judæan mountain. The parallel was so obviously intended by the author that his secretary Riemer has inserted in the margin, "Matthew, chap. iv." What is it Faust is thinking of? From this eminence the kingdoms of the world are to be surveyed—let Faust take his choice of their delights. Faust has his air-castle—Mephistopheles must guess its nature. The latter suggests he would choose the life of some great



city, say Paris, and then as luxurious aristocrat enjoy the contrast between his pampered self and the poor wretches of the squalid streets and crowded alleys, receiving universal homage. Or he might build another palace of Versailles—splendid gardens, cooling fountains, and secluded retreats for love and leisure. The voluptuous picture has no attraction for Faust; it is all bad and modern. Faust does not desire the repute of another Sardanapalus. If good things such as these are despised, Faust's dream must be very sublime indeed. He has been lately flying through the air, perhaps his thoughts have tended moonwards—there is plenty of room there for castle-building. By no means. There is ample space upon this earth of ours for noble deeds. Well then, it must be a great name, blown abroad by the breath of fame. Faust replies :—

Dominion and estate by me are sought.

The *deed* is everything, the fame is nought.

But the poor Devil cannot grasp Faust's high purpose. Action for action's sake is something more than he can comprehend. He thinks the motive to exertion can be found in the hope of reward alone, whether that reward be the full one of sensuous pleasure or the empty one of popular applause. But Faust must reveal the great secret, for no further suggestion is forthcoming. Faust then declares :—

Mine eye was fixed upon the open sea :  
 Aloft it tower'd, up-heaving ; then once more  
 Withdrew, and shook its waves exultingly,  
 To storm the wide expanse of level shore—  
 That angered me, since arrogance of mood,  
 In the free soul, that values every right,  
 Through the impetuous passion of the blood,  
 Harsh feeling genders, in its own despire.  
 I deemed it chance ; more keenly eyed the main :  
 The billow paused, and then rolled back again,  
 And from its proudly conquered goal withdrew ;  
 The hour returns, the sport it doth renew.  
 On through a thousand channels it doth press,  
 Barren itself, and causing barrenness ;  
 It waxes, swells, it rolls and spreads its reign  
 Over the waste and desolate domain.  
 There, power-inspired, wave upon wave sweeps on,  
 Triumphs awhile, retreats—and naught is done :  
 It to despair might drive me to survey  
 Of lawless elements the aimless sway !  
 To soar above itself then dared my soul ;  
 Here would I strive, this force would I control !  
 And it is possible. Howe'er the tide  
 May rise, it fawneth round each hillock's side ;  
 However proudly it may domineer,  
 Each puny height its crest doth 'gainst it rear,  
 Each puny deep it forcefully allures.  
 So swiftly plan on plan my mind matures :  
 This glorious pleasure for thyself attain ;  
 Back from the shore to bar the imperious main,  
 Narrow the limits of the watery deep,  
 Constrain it far into itself to sweep !  
 My purpose step by step I might lay bare :  
 That is my wish, to aid it boldly dare !—S.

To dam back the ocean—that is Faust's wish ; to wrestle with the mightiest necessity within the reach of human arms, to win new ground from the barren deep for the ploughshare of fruit-desiring man.

Goethe, arrived at the present stage of his work, had before him the problem how inartificially to introduce Faust into a suitable sphere of high social activity. It clearly lay in the necessity of the case to impose upon his hero the task of government, to exhibit him striving to infuse a higher spirit into the national life, to clothe him with the dignity of high office and political authority. That Goethe was aware this was required of him, we know from a few posthumous fragments, wherein Mephistopheles has almost the whole talk to himself, depicting the futility of political effort. Goethe continually delayed the execution of his programme, postponed it until (we may surmise) age deprived him of the inventive force requisite for the task. Why he waited so long it is not difficult to divine. Few things seem to have been more distasteful to him than ordinary political affairs. He seems to have believed in the rule neither of the few nor of the many. The latter were an undisciplined mob, not fit to have the control of such high concerns, and the former were usually either entirely devoid of insight into the real wants of their times, or else caring only for their own advantages. He admired Napoleon because he had both originality and clear

perception, was not a mere crowned official or an ignorant demagogue. The political methods which had for the most part hitherto obtained in the world he vivaciously illustrated at the end of the present act—and the picture is not inspiring. He appears not to have had much faith in reforms from the outside. He believed that inward clarification must precede outward reform—did not think much could be done by either kings or parliaments. And when the concerns were so grave, he feared rash intermeddling. “I hate,” he said, “all bungling like sin, but most of all bungling in state affairs, which produces nothing but mischief to thousands and millions.” The political sphere then seemed hardly worthy of the energies of his hero. For a man with great controlling gifts, with a high social purpose, there seemed only one of two courses to show his superiority, either to grapple with Nature and subdue its wild forces to the service of man, or to work as a social reformer on the large scale. In Faust’s vision of the struggle with the sea, doubtless these two things are intended to be symbolized.

Reverting to the historical point of view, we have now to imagine Humanity as bent upon the hardest of its tasks, the subduing of the refractory energies of Nature, and the securing of standing-ground for a succession of strivers who will carry on the never-ended contest. Nature has to be prepared for the

abode of the free man—but how is the city of the free to be built up? Well, there is only one way open—through conflict; and now, as Faust concludes the description of his purpose, an opportunity is offered for realization—the drums of an army sounding to battle are heard in the distance. The goal is civilization, but civilization is reached through war. Faust does not like the sound of this martial music. From his present elevated standpoint this struggling of the nations has something coarse and brutal about it. If it were only possible he would avoid this uncongenial path. But it is not possible; there is no other way to gain ground but through the natural selection of conquest.

To return to the story.<sup>1</sup> Faust now learns that the emperor to whom he once, relying on the hint of Mephistopheles, thought to do a good turn, has really been ruined by his advice. Wealth being so easy to

<sup>1</sup> The old legend offered a hint for the following scenes. According to it, the magician, Johann Faust, boasted of having won all the victories of the Emperor Charles V. in Italy, and especially the battle of Pavia; and in Marlowe, after the necromancer's services in saving the life of the anti-Pope Bruno, the imperial protégé, and presenting the shades of Alexander the Great "and his beautiful paramour," Charles says:—

Come, Faustus, while the emperor lives,  
In recompense of this thy high desert,  
Thou shalt command the state of Germany,  
And live beloved of mighty Carolus.

come at by the simple paper-money expedient, the emperor has been impoverishing the people in pursuit of his own pleasures, and has let his empire go to rack and ruin. Utter anarchy prevails, every man doing what is right in his own eyes. Half his people are up in arms, and, backed by the clergy, a formidable rebellion is on foot. An anti-Caesar has been nominated, and the weak young monarch is now encamped on the neighbouring hills, driven to fight a last pitched battle for life and crown. If Faust really wants a strip of coast to carry out his mad whim, here is his opportunity. Let him aid the lawful sovereign, and he may almost make his own terms. Faust has never served in war before (the third act, let it be remembered, is only a phantasmagory), and he does not see that his assistance can be of much service. But Mephistopheles assures him there is no need of military skill. Let him only equip himself in appropriate costume, and give himself knowing airs, the general's staff will do the actual work. The staff is Mephistopheles, who summons a select body-guard, three allegorical rascals (as he informs the spectators in an aside) with the significant names of Bully, Havequick, and Holdfast. Each of these is destined to play a conspicuous part in the coming battle. Bully is young and lightly armed—he represents the pure delight in fighting as such, the ferocious spirit which gives no quarter; Havequick, somewhat older, gaily

dressed, personifies the spirit of plunder, the indispensable stimulus of a savage soldiery; and Holdfast, well in years, in close-fitting armour, is the tenacious grip which retains the booty. With these motley attendants Faust and Mephistopheles descend the mountain.

The emperor and his generalissimo are examining the field. The plan of the battle seems satisfactory. The emperor's tent has been pitched on the centre of a range of hills looking down into a valley, on the other side of which is the enemy. The army is divided into three groups, one portion on the right secured from effective cavalry charges by gently undulating ground. The main body is in the valley in the centre. On the left is a thickly massed portion, holding the only pass to the steep mountain-range on which the emperor is posted. Scouts hurry up, reporting that the anti-Caesar has got together a formidable army, and that the people flock to his banner like sheep. The young emperor's courage rises high. He will send a challenge to single combat with the leader of the rival host. Now enter Faust in armour, with half-closed vizor, a necessary precaution if he is not to be recognized as the Plutus of old times. Close behind, the three mighty men. Faust announces himself as the emissary of a Sabine necromancer, whom the emperor snatched from the stake during his stay in Rome. The grateful old man sends

him to unlock the forces of the mountains for the service of the emperor. The emperor is gratified at this unlooked-for aid, but replies there is no need of succour now, for he has sent a challenge to his rival to meet him in single combat between the armies. He, the young monarch, will do all the work himself. But the heralds now return announcing that the anti-Caesar laughs at the challenge—there can be only one emperor, and that is the leader of the opposing force.

The emperor resigns the conduct of affairs to the general-in-chief, who at once gives orders for commencing the conflict. Faust begs permission for his three warriors to join the army, and Bully, Holdfast, and Havequick, after delivering themselves of characteristic speeches, dash off to head respectively the right and left wings and centro, a vivandière, Speedbooty, uniting herself to the genius of plunder. Mephistopheles now appears, and points to a reserve-corps he has brought up on the left wing, an apparently imposing body, with all the accoutrements of war, stationed at the head of the pass. He confides, however, to the audience that they are only dummies; he has ransacked the old halls round about for their rickety armour, and though the rattling of the breastplates is appalling enough, all is hollow inside, the wearers being only ghosts of deceased warriors.

The battle rages. The sky is all a-glow. Nature



seems to take part in the fray. The enemy appears to waver. But there are uncanny signs which trouble the emperor. Where nimble Bully on the right wing should raise his single arm, a dozen arms seem to be uplifted. It is only a multiplying mirage, answers Faust, such as is to be seen in the Sicilian *Fata Morgana*. The tops of the spears seem to gleam with spectral lights. But this is only the lambent flames known by mariners as St. Elmo's fire. The emperor desires to know to whom he is indebted for this league of Nature with human effort. To whom but the Norcian sorcerer? Mephistopheles replies; it is his gratitude which has wrought these wonders. The emperor is glad that he rescued the white-beard from the flames. It is true that he has lost clerical favour thereby,—

Shall I, at last, since many years are over,  
The payment for that merry deed recover?

Without doubt, answers Mephistopheles. But now let the emperor look above him. The Norcian wizard sends an omen. An eagle and a griffin appear, grappling in the sky. Presently the griffin falls torn and bleeding among the tree-tops. (Goethe is here indebted to an episode in the *Iliad* which has been more than once imitated.) All augurs well for the imperial cause on the right and centre, and Mephistopheles declares the battle to be won, when the

emperor points anxiously to the key of the position, the pass at the left. Here fly up two ravens, the scouts of Mephistopheles, who station themselves at either ear of their master, to report the progress of the battle. They are the Devil's carrier-pigeons. In the Icelandic prose Edda we read, "Two ravens sit on Odin's shoulders, and whisper in his ear the tidings and events they have heard and witnessed. They are called Hugin and Munin (mind or thought and memory). He sends them out at dawn of day to fly over the whole world, and they return at eve towards meal-time. Hence it is that Odin knows so many things, and is called the raven's god. As it is said—

Hugin and Munin  
Each dawn take their flight  
Earth's fields over.  
I fear me for Hugin (forethought)  
Lest he come not back,  
But much more for Munin (memory)."<sup>1</sup>

Mephistopheles says the ravens report ill. If the pass be taken, all is over with the Imperialists. The emperor, who was glad enough of his new allies while matters prospered, now repents of his union with the conjurer, and the generalissimo rushes in, despairingly declaring that the new-comers have ruined the cause,

<sup>1</sup> Mallet's "Northern Antiquities," p. 430.

and surrenders his staff. The emperor retires to his tent along with the general-in-chief, leaving the battle to be fought by Faust and Mephistopheles. No sooner are the faint-hearted emperor and his incapable generalissimo disposed of than Mephistopheles gives orders to the ravens to repair to the Undines, the spirits of water, and procure their assistance. The birds fly away, and soon Faust sees trickling down the hills innumerable streams which gather into a torrent, disconcerting the foe, who appear like struggling swimmers. Mephistopheles declares he can see nothing of it at all—it is an illusion for human senses. The ravens return, and are requested to betake themselves to the Gnomes, the spirits of the mountain-forges, and bid them dazzle the eyes of the enemy with illusory flashes in unlooked-for places, meteoric showers, &c. All happens as desired. One thing more is required to complete the disorder; sounds are needed as well as sights. The band of ghostly armour-bearers now rush upon each other, renewing the old party strifes of Guelfs and Ghibellines, and the foe, utterly bewildered by the weird crashing, aided by ghastly shrieks, fly in wild panic over the plain.

The description of the battle is meant to bring out the conditions of successful warfare, the alliance of human and natural forces. Foremost must be reckoned the old Adam of love of destruction, the

innate savagery of man, personified in the three mighty men, Bully, Havequick, and Holdfast. The beliefs and feelings of the combatants are also essential ingredients. Superstition has played an important part in former times, and the emotional predisposition of the combatants is never to be lost sight of. Then the Norcian conjurer and the assistance of Undines and Gnomes probably typify the growing importance of science in modern warfare. Bully and Holdfast, valuable as they are, are not enough for carrying matters to a successful issue. The genius which is in command of all the knowledge of the age will turn the scale. One would almost think that Goethe had a vision of Von Moltke when he made the silent Faust (and Mephisto his *alter ego*) the real winner of the day, the man of pure intellect before whom the military leader of the old type has to retire as quite superannuated. It is not in war, however, the Devil's game by pre-eminence, that people are slow to appreciate the full light of knowledge. The satire on the clergy who do not approve of the sorcerer, is hardly an effective satire here.

Goethe had special qualifications for dealing with the theme of War. At the Court of Weimar he was for a time minister of that department; and in 1792, when the allied Germans invaded France to restore Louis XVI. to his throne, he accompanied the Grand Duke in a nondescript capacity to the theatre of

action. During the campaign he exhibited remarkable *sangfroid*. For war itself, and the mistaken policy which in the present instance led to it, he had a profound dislike. He was soon heart-sick of its miseries and injustices. He was glad to turn aside from the horrors to pursue his scientific speculations, and found fresh material for theories on colours in the lights and shades of the scenery illuminated by such lurid fires. Several of the weird impressions produced by the description in "Faust" may be traced to such personal observations as the following, which I quote from the translation of G. H. Lewes:—

"I had heard much of the cannon fever, and I wanted to know what kind of thing it was. Ennui and a spirit which every kind of danger excited to daring, nay even to rashness, induced me to ride up quite coolly to the outwork of La Lunc. This was again occupied by our people, but it presented the wildest aspect. The roofs were shot to pieces, the cornshocks scattered about, the bodies of men mortally wounded stretched upon them here and there, and occasionally a spent cannon-ball fell and rattled among the ruins of the tile-roofs. Quite alone, and left to myself, I rode away on the heights to the left, and could plainly survey the favourable position of the French. They were standing in the form of a semicircle in the greatest quiet and security. Kellermann, on the left wing, being the easiest to reach

. . . . I had now arrived quite in the region where the balls were playing across me: the sound of them is curious enough, as if it were composed of the humming of tops, the gurgling of water, and the whistling of birds. They were less dangerous by reason of the wetness of the ground; wherever one fell it stuck fast. And thus my foolish experimental ride was secured against the danger at least of the balls rebounding. In these circumstances I was soon able to remark that something unusual was taking place within me: I paid close attention to it, and still the sensation can be described only by similitude. It appeared as if you were in some extremely hot place, and at the same time quite penetrated by the heat of it, so that you feel yourself, as it were, quite one with the element in which you are. The eyes lose nothing of their strength or clearness; but it is as if the world had a kind of brown-red tint, which makes the situation, as well as the surrounding objects, more impressive. I was unable to perceive any agitation of the blood, but everything seemed rather to be swallowed up in the glow of which I speak. From this, then, it is clear in what sense the condition can be called a fever. It is remarkable, however, that the horrible uneasy feeling arising from it is produced in us solely through the ears. For the cannon thunder, the howling, whistling, crashing of the balls through the air, is the real cause of these

sensations. After I had ridden back, and was in perfect security, I remarked with surprise that the glow was completely extinguished, and not the slightest feverish agitation was left behind."<sup>1</sup>

Compare this with Faust's description:—

Now dark the whole horizon shows.  
 Yet here and there presageful glows.  
 A ruddy and portentous ray :  
 The weapons gleam, distained with blood :  
 The atmosphere, the rock, the wood.  
 The heavens, mingle in the fray.

\* \* \* \* \*

In sooth, I know not what to say.  
 So hot it was the live-long day !  
 Fearful, oppressive, close, as well ;  
 While one man stood, another fell ;  
 We groped, still striking at the foe ;  
 Opponents fell at every blow—  
 Floated before our eyes a mist ;  
 Then in our ear it buzzed, hummed, hissed.  
 So on it went—now are we here :  
 The manner of it is not clear!—S.

The time spent with the army was not the most agreeable period of Goethe's life, but he never repented it. As Lewes excellently remarks, " Experience is the most effectual schoolmaster ; although, as Jean Paul says, ' the school-fees are somewhat heavy.' Goethe was always willing to pay the fees, if he could but get the instruction."

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Goethe," second edition, pp. 372-373.

The rival emperor's tent has been abandoned, and Havequick and Speedbooty, of course, are the first to reach it. They are distracted by the variety of choice offered them. The man-thief seizes a steel club, the woman a rich robe. Speedbooty, trying to raise a heavy chest, loses her hold, when the chest springs open, displaying a heap of coin. She picks up as many pieces as she can, but the apron has a hole in it, and she drops the gold as fast as it is gathered. The imperial soldiers now enter and drive off the shameless marauders. Then the emperor, with four chief princes, appears upon the scene. The emperor is both elated and spiritually humbled. Everything has prospered beyond hope. Though possibly some chance and not a little cunning may have contributed to the result, yet victory is theirs—praised be God ! From a million throats the solemn “*Te Deum*” is sounding—praised be the Lord, who always favours the stronger cause, and punishes him who allows himself to be out-manoeuvred !

In former days the humbled sovereign may have been somewhat thoughtless—it is the error of youth, but for the future he will govern well, and show himself a wise father of his people. And so, as the first pledge of his reformation, he will cement anew the friendship of these, the most powerful of his subjects. And first to him whose wise counsel and heroic conduct in the hour of trial gained the day—the general-



in-chief! He is nominated arch-marshal, in token whereof the sword of the empire is rendered him. The highest reward to the man who deserted his post at the critical moment, the humdrum officer, whose imbecility was only covered by the ability of his subordinates, who got the emperor out of the terrible scrape, but who are not so much as thought of! This worthy very appropriately replies that he will take good care that the emperor's banquet-room be properly guarded, and he, the arch-marshal, will stand beside the throne on the festal day, holding aloft the bare sword. The emperor turns to the second, to him who combines court tact with valour. The arch-chamberlain's duties are no light ones; he has to set an example of obsequiousness to the members of the royal household, so that they may duly respect their exalted master. The arch-chamberlain is fully impressed with his new dignity. At the festal board be it his high office to reach his sovereign the golden basin, and hold his diamond rings while he laves his hands. The third is named arch-steward. He is the master of the hounds and head game-preserve. Let him duly order the very choicest dishes, dressed with proper *caro*. The arch-steward fervently replies :—

Strict fasting be for me the duty that I boast  
Until before thee placed the dish to please thee most.

The emperor began quite seriously with the best aspirations, but his judicious nobles have so persistently turned the proffered honours to the account of festivities that there is nothing to be done but to keep up the strain. So the fourth and youngest prince shall be named arch-cupbearer. It shall be his office to procure the choicest wines, a favour which evokes the courtly reply:—

Your highness, youth itself, if trust therein be shown,  
 Stands, ere one looks around, to man's full stature grown.

As a guarantee of all these dignities, let letters patent be prepared, and the royal seal affixed. And here at the right moment is the man to execute the weighty charge; the archbishop, arch-chancellor. The sovereign addresses himself to this supreme dignitary. The speech is too weighty to be given in other than the emperor's own words:—

If in the keystone of the arch the vault confide,  
 'Tis then securely built, for endless time and tide.  
 Thou seest four princes here! To them we've just expounded  
 How next our house and court shall be more stably founded.  
 Now, all the realm contains, within its bounds enclosed,  
 Shall be, with weight and power, upon ye five imposed!  
 Your landed wealth shall be before all others splendid:  
 Therefore at once have I your properties extended  
 From their inheritance, who raised 'gainst us the hand.  
 You I award, ye faithful, many a lovely land,  
 Together with the right, as you may have occasion,  
 To spread them by exchange, or purchase, or invasion.

Then be it clearly fixed, that you unhindered use  
Whate'er prerogatives have been the landlord's dues.  
When ye, as judges, have the final sentence spoken,  
By no appeal from your high court shall it be broken :  
Then levies, tax and rent, pass-money, tolls and fees  
Are yours,—of mines and salt and coin the royalties.  
That thus my gratitude may validly be stated,  
You next to majesty hereby I've elevated.—T.

Could satire be more brilliant? Goethe can hardly be accused of being a vulgar aristocrat after this. His opinion is pretty plainly expressed how the good things of the world go, and what sort of folk they are to whose lot they fall. One hardly knows at which to marvel most, the incredible folly of the weak-minded monarch, who simply strengthened the power of his vassals against himself, or the frivolity of the great State-officers. Here has been a contest for life and crown, a death-struggle necessitated by the incapacity of these wooden-headed notables, and yet the hard battle is no sooner gained, with *at the most* the passivity of these superior beings, and all the fruits of victory fall to them! No change whatever is made in the administration, no new blood, no far-seeing brain called to the front, but these political dolls are dressed in still finer raiment than they were clothed in before, and their possessions declared absolutely inalienable. The only clever one in the whole party, if a combination of selfish greed and gross bigotry can be so designated, is the chancellor. The chancellor

—the head at once of the Law and the Church—gave us a taste of his quality in the first act, when Mephistopheles advised the emperor to seek counsel of “a man endowed with Mind and Nature’s might.” He then interrupted :—

Nature and Mind—to Christians we don’t speak so.  
Thence to burn Atheists we seek so,  
In such discourses very dangerous be.  
Nature is Sin, and Mind is Devil ;  
Doubt they beget in shameless revel.  
Their hybrid in deformity.  
Not so with us !—Two only races  
Have in the Empire kept their places,  
And prop the throne with worthy weight.  
The Saints and Knights are they : together  
They breast each spell of thunder-weather,  
And take for pay the Church and State.—T.

That they certainly do in the present instance, and with a vengeance, too, as will presently appear. For the secular princes, the “knights,” have no sooner retired than the “arch-chancellor and bishop” draws a very long face :—

The Chancellor is gone, the Bishop doth remain,  
His father’s heart for thee trembles with anxious pain.  
Him a deep-warning soul impels thine ear to seek.

What is amiss ? Why, the emperor has been guilty of a deadly sin in letting his throne be saved by men whom the holy father has cursed. Penance must be performed for this, or the emperor will certainly be

excommunicate. And this repentance can be only shown in one way. Let the spot where these devilish deeds were done (that is, the saving of the nation by the strategy and science of the strangers) be dedicated to the Church. It is a fine spot—brooks and lakes, meadows and grassy slopes, too good for the prince of this world, but just the place for the self-denying servant of heaven. The emperor is so conscience-smitten that he tells the archbishop to draw the boundaries of the sacred domain at his pleasure. The archbishop adds, a splendid cathedral must arise on that very spot. Nothing could suit the emperor's mood better. The great work will "for his sin atone;" and the arch-chancellor may draw the deed of gift forthwith. The archbishop is taking his leave, but, having reached the door, he turns back. An important point has been overlooked. The work will be incomplete unless the cathedral be endowed in perpetuity. And beyond a doubt a gracious emperor and pious people will willingly contribute all the labour and building materials gratis.

EMPEROR.

Heavy and sore the sin whose burden I bewail.

And so be it all accorded. The high functionary takes his leave, but returns once more with the profoundest obeisance. The man who has seduced the emperor from the straight path (making him rely on

human science instead of the Church's prayers), the archbishop learns with grief has received as his reward the coast-line whereon the tide still ebbs and flows. But the Church's ban will smite him unless tithes, rates, and taxes for the same be rendered to the Church for evermore. The emperor (now nettled) exclaims:—

The land is not yet there ; broad in the sea it lies.

No matter—a tenth must come to the Church when it shall be dry ground. The emperor, left alone, lets fall his only wise word in the whole scene:—

So may I sign away the realm o'er which I reign !

Whatever scourging secular levity may have received, it cannot be denied that ecclesiastical rapacity has received a sharper lash. Surveying with a clear wide-ranging glance the chequered course of history, Goethe saw under what hampering conditions every advance has been made, how hereditary selfishness has presented an unchangeable front to the most needed reforms, how, even when ground was gained for the foot of civilization, it has been burdened with charges, and limited in every possible way. As Goethe said to Eckermann: "Mark this: the world will not attain its goal so speedily as we expect and desire. There are always retarding demons who start up in opposition at every point, so that although the

whole progresses, it is but slowly. Only live long enough, and you will find that I am right."

As concerns our story, however, the point is that Faust has gained lawfully and by services the strip of sea-shore which has been the limit of his modest demands. His task now is to dam back the waves. It is the most unpromising reward, apparently, he could have received for his work, but the author could find no fitter symbol of the task that lies before the highest philanthropist. What do the starving millions more need now than *land*? But not land alone. All land was once in the condition of this floor of the ocean, utterly valueless to human life. The barren waste has to be reclaimed, there must be digging and ploughing, canals scooped out, houses erected—Nature is the rough ore which has to be refined by hard industry, and the pure metal when extracted must be polished into grace and beauty.

This is the problem which Faust, as incarnation of the world-destiny, has, during the life-term, and within the limits imposed on all human effort, effectively to solve.

## X.

### THE SUPREME MOMENT.

**I**T is open country. The day is somewhat advanced, and a traveller of mature age is approaching a group of linden trees and a small cottage overgrown with moss. His face kindles with delight as he catches sight of the place. If only the old folks are still living there who years ago when he was wrecked on the neighbouring dunes rescued him from the fury of the waves, and entertained him so hospitably ! He begins to knock, when the mistress of the house, a shrivelled old woman, appears at the door, imploring silence for the sake of the aged husband who is taking his afternoon rest. Is it really the same Baucis (old already then) who stands before him, and this Philemon who now appears roused from his sleep ? The good angels who ministered to him in the darkest hour of his life ? An overpowering emotion urges him to bring the old time vividly back again by gazing on the boundless sea, and to renew his thanksgiving beside it. Philemon whispers to Baucis to prepare in



the shade a meal for the stranger, and follows the wanderer. He then tells him that a great change has come over the scene since that well-remembered day. Where once the sea rolled is now a wide extent of flourishing country—meadows, woods, and villages, a land already thickly peopled. The blue sea is hardly to be descried in the distance, but one can just perceive the white sails as the ships glide into port.

Returned to the little garden where Baucis has arranged the evening meal, the puzzled traveller cannot eat for amazement, and Philemon bids his wife tell him the whole story of the transformation. The venerable hostess shakes her head—it was wonderful indeed, but yet the means employed were hardly lawful. “How so?” asks her husband; “did not the emperor ordain it, and was not good solid work done?” “By day,” relates the wife, “though many men were employed, the work never advanced, but in the darkness strange things must have happened, for in the morning a dyke was visible. The shrieks of victims might be heard in the dead of night. A flood of flame rolled in from the sea, and lo! at dawn a miraculously-cut canal appeared. The lord of the domain is godless, he covets their old hut and shady grove.” “He offers for it a fair equivalent,” suggests her spouse. “Never trust to watery foundations,” is the reply; “remain on the dry height.” “The sun is setting,” says the old chapel-tender; “let us repair

to the church, ring the vesper-bell, offer our evening prayer, and lay our souls again in the hands of our fathers' God."

The author of all these changes, as prince of the empire, has also shared in the general gain. A splendid palace has been erected for him, surrounded by an ample pleasure-ground, through which a straight and broad canal runs to the sea. He is walking meditatively about in his garden as the sun sinks on this day of the wanderer's return, when the sound of the distant chapel-bell reaches his ear. He has outlived the ordinary span of life. He is a centenarian, but still in the full possession of his faculties. The bell recalls him from a reverie. It is no welcome sound, it reminds him that a portion of his great design has not yet been executed. The chapel and the little hut have long been eyesores to him. They are relics of a barbarous past, out of place in a world struggling to the broad expanse of knowledge and the constructions of a higher skill.

The warder of the palace, through his speaking-trumpet, announces the approach of a handsome ship with flapping pendants, richly laden. With a cheer the crew bring the ship into port, and at once proceed to unlade it. The task completed, the master sends his three chief mariners, whose acquaintance we made under another disguise in the last act, to announce the arrival. In the estimation of Captain Mephis-

topheles all has gone swimmingly; they only left home with a couple of ships and have returned with a score. Any rich craft they met on their voyage they boarded without ceremony; they have acted up to the time-honoured motto, "Might is right," and hence they have invested their capital to the greatest advantage. War, Trade, and Piracy—what matters terminology? It is all the same, an interest-gaining trinity. But the three mighty comrades return with sour looks. Notwithstanding they have prospered so wonderfully, the lord has vouchsafed no thanks; on the contrary, his face clearly showed more disgust than pleasure. Well, they need not mind, they have already taken their pay without waiting to have it legitimately doled out to them. Only enough to drive away ennui, is the rejoinder, but they expect a further share, and for all equally. Well, let them go arrange the treasures in the palace' halls, and when the lord passes by he will be no niggard they may rest assured. Mephistopheles now approaches Faust, and wants to know why he is looking so glum after all his achievements, and with his splendid possessions. Faust interrupts him. All he has wrought for and obtained on this spot has lost its charm, he cannot be satisfied while there is still a part of his purpose yet unaccomplished. The dark lindens surround his fancy like a pall, and the tinkling church-bell drives him distracted. Mephistopheles is not

surprised at this last cause of distress, it almost drives him mad too. But why fret in this fashion? Has he not recognized it as his mission to be a great colonizer? He has only to say the word and the old couple shall be removed elsewhither. Well, let it be done then, but the venerable pair are to be placed safely in the comfortable dwelling he has long intended for them. Mephistopheles whistles for his three assistants, and they start off on their errand.

Night arrives. Lynceus is at his post on the watch-tower. It is a beautiful starlit night, and the warder cheerily sings the eternal glory that irradiates the universe. But his singing is suddenly checked, for a dreadful sight appals him. The distant linden trees are ablaze, the flames spreading rapidly among the dry twigs—the old cottage burns (if its inmates are only safe!). Lastly, the little chapel catches fire and crashes to the ground, and the sky is lit up with one red glow. And as the flame finishes its direful work the sad song of Lynceus is heard from his tower:—

Gone what once the eye delighted  
With the ages long ago!

Faust on a balcony hears the plaintive note, turns and sees the track of the fire-spirit. But he consoles himself with the thought that the aged pair are safe. They will end their days in a better home, and his great design will not lack completion. Mephistopheles

and his three comrades come running up to give their report. The old couple would not open the door, and so an entry had to be effected by force. Commands and threats proving fruitless, the pair were driven forth, but presently expired with fright. A stranger who was concealed in the cabin showed fight, and had to be summarily disposed of. In the disorder some hot coals got flung about, and, falling on the inflammable material of the hut, all happened as had been seen :—

The straw caught fire, 'tis blazing free,  
As funeral death-pyre for the three.

Such were not Faust's orders ; he desired exchange, not rapine and murder ; let them all take themselves off, and with his curse. Faust, left alone, observes how the light of the stars is becoming gradually veiled. A smoke-cloud hides the sky, and in the fumes wafted towards him by the gale seem to be borne dusky spectral figures.

The twofold point of view, the particular individual and the universal historical, is nowhere more necessary than in judging the foregoing scenes, but it is not difficult to say how much belongs to each. Since the close of the fourth act the man Faust has entered on his social career, and the feudal age has passed into the modern industrial era. The poet would have us understand that in the life of Faust a long period of

solid activity has intervened, as long a period, perhaps, as Faust has hitherto lived altogether. We might imagine him to have been fifty when he won the emperor's battle and received the sea-shore as his fee; according to Goethe's own statement, he is just one hundred years old when he appears in the present act. How he has spent his time in the interim has to be gathered from the descriptions of Philemon, Baucis, and the Wanderer. But the historical point of view is more significant, because the changes which have taken place so much more appropriately suit the lives of generations than that of the single man. In the account of the old cottagers we have an admirable presentment of the way in which the change from an old to a new order is regarded by the natural conservatism of the multitude. We must see in Philemon and Baucis the representatives of those good old times which in some fashion doubtless existed, that primitive uneventful mode of living, when the wants are few and easily supplied, and unquestioning piety puts up its simple prayer as an integrant part of the daily business.

But this unreflecting, unaspiring, peaceful age cannot last for ever. The hut becomes moss-grown, and the church-bell, though it still tinkles as regularly as ever for matins and vespers, grows old and decays. As fresh land is recovered from the barren deep, as colonization proceeds, new peoples arise, great econo-

mical undertakings are set on foot, and the mental horizon recedes ever further into the distance. The relics of a remote past become very scarce, and the representatives of an almost extinct order of things linger on in an existence whose working hours are few, and the old Church offers but slight opposition to the blazing light of knowledge. Looked at from the point of view of an older order of ideas, progress seems the work of some infernal power, and we have in the story of Baucis (a story put not without design in the mouth of the woman) the pious fabling, without any intentional falsifying of facts, which is the shape such novel changes take in the mind that has lost the power of re-adjustment. In the open daylight, before her natural eyes, she could see nothing wonderful about it all. Men were toiling almost vainly with axe and spade, the changes being so gradual that little advance was ever perceptibly made. But yet, somehow or other, the face of things was changed. Canals were scooped out, cities raised, strange institutions called into being. It must have been the work of demons, and excited fancy imagines it hears the wail of dying human victims, and sees the ghostly gleam of infernal torches. The more matter-of-fact Philemon does not seem to share these beliefs; to the unimaginative man it must have been all right, for what the king decrees cannot be unlawful, and he is even inclined to accept Faust's offer to remove to

another homestead, as a not unprofitable exchange. But that proposal is to his pious spouse the height of impiety. To be participant in this criminal progress, to eat, as it were, the Devil's bread—the good old soul shudders at the thought. The cottage dates from the old God-fearing times, when none of these new-fangled schemes were rife, when these clanking forges of the new iron-world were unheard, and the old property was handed on just as it was received from generation to generation—the same thing in the end as in the beginning—was, and ever ought to be. But Destiny is pitiless. If the old would not give place to the new in the fairly just spirit of the new, the old must be extinguished in pain. It is a lesson which conservatism finds it hard to learn, especially very venerable institutions, and when the change has to come it does seem sad, and even the enlightened watchman on the tower cannot refrain from his dirge over another departed beauty. It is clearly pointed out, however, that Faust is but the instrument of destiny. He does not *will* wrong—the very thought of injustice is revolting to his soul, but he is constrained to give the order for improvement by a harassing voice which declares that all is vain if progress do not continue. His idea is grand, alas! that it is the rough practical will, not the refined intelligence, that must realize it. The idealist Faust would never have *done* anything; he dreamed and longed,



longed and dreamed, but there stood the aged lindens and the old hut. The practical spirit must do the work, and that spirit is a spirit abounding in energy, but extremely unceremonious. Mephistopheles has to do the deed, an unfeeling instrument, with an eye fixed alone on the end, careless in respect of the means, and the result is ground certainly gained for a higher order of things, but a harsh wrong. That is in substance the history of progress; so has it been since the world began, and so it continues to be. The red man, the Maori, the African savage, retire in misery and pain before the ever-advancing footsteps of an alien but larger-brained race; and there always remains a Naboth's vineyard to excite the cupidity of the princeliest possessor.

But out of the smoke of the burning dwelling of the past emerge the spectres which ever attend as shadows the grasping lord of the hour. Philemon and Baucis, in the narrow country home, with few and easily satisfied desires, know nothing of these giant evils. They are for their successors, the artisan of the busy town, the children of an age of luxury.

It has grown on towards midnight of the eventful day of Humanity's life.

*(Four grey women enter.)*

FIRST.

My name, it is Want.

SECOND.

And mine, it is Guilt.

THIRD.

And mine, it is Care.

FOURTH.

Necessity, mine.

THREE TOGETHER.

The portal is bolted, we cannot get in :  
The owner is rich ; we've no business within.

WANT.

I shrink to a shadow.

GUILT.

I shrink unto naught.

NECESSITY.

The pampered from me turn the face and the thought.

CARE.

Ye Sisters, ye neither can enter, nor dare ;  
But the keyhole is free to the entrance of Care.

*(Care disappears.)*

WANT.

Ye, grisly old Sisters, be banished from here !

GUILT.

Beside thee, and bound to thee, I shall appear !

NECESSITY.

At your heels goes Necessity, blight in her breath.

THE THREE.

The clouds are in motion, and cover each star !

Behind there, behind ! from afar, from afar,  
He cometh, our Brother ! he comes, he is . . .  
. . . Death !—T.

Four is the number of the phantom forms which Faust seems to descry in the gloom ; but their whispered words are well-nigh incomprehensible. Four appeared, but only three have departed, and he has caught the one word, "Death." Want, Blame or Guilt, and Need or Necessity cannot enter the rich man's palace. Pallid Want certainly is out of place there, and Need or Craving has no entrance where all is so well furnished. It might seem, however, that Guilt was just the very shape to enter Faust's home now, but hardly, for though regret may vex his soul, it is not quite remorse for conscious wrong. It is not Blame, the fruit of an injury the perpetrators of which he has dismissed with imprecations, but mysterious Care, near sister perhaps, which effects an entrance into the most securely barred mansion.

Faust in this midnight hour, with all the surroundings of tragic horror, cannot but be shaken in soul. It is very long since he trembled to think of the close contact of the supernatural, but at the very end of his career, when the recollections of early days are particularly powerful, he fancies he sees sights and hears sounds which have long lost their terror.

The door seems to creak, and yet no one enters. He calls, "Is some one here?" Yes, there is a

spectral figure nearing him. His impulse is to have recourse to the old exorcism, but he checks himself in time. The formless visitor inquires :—

Hast thou as yet Care never known ?

No, Faust has never known it. He declares that he has passed through the world without such a self-tormentor. To aught beyond the present moment he has never given heed. He has rejoiced and suffered, but always in the realm of sense, in a sunlit world. If he has not known her yet, let him now become acquainted with her, answers Care.

To him whom I have made mine own  
All profitless the world hath grown :  
Eternal gloom around him lies ;  
For him suns neither set nor rise ;  
With outward senses perfect, whole,  
Dwell darknesses within his soul :  
Though wealth he owneth, ne'ertheless  
He nothing truly can possess.  
Weal, woe, become mere phantasy ;  
He hungers 'mid satiety ;  
Be it joy, or be it sorrow,  
He postpones it till the morrow ;  
Of the future thinking ever,  
Prompt for present action never.  
Shall he come or go ? He ponders ;—  
All resolve from him is taken ;  
On the beaten path he wanders,  
Groping on, as if forsaken.  
Deeper still himself he loses,

Everything his sight abuses,  
 Both himself and others hating,  
 Taking breath—and suffocating,  
 Without life—yet scarcely dying,  
 Not despairing—not relying.  
 Rolling on without remission :  
 Loathsome ought, and sad permission,  
 Now deliverance, now vexation,  
 Semi-sleep,—poor recreation,  
 Nail him to his place and wear him,  
 And at last for hell prepare him.—S.

Such is the uncanny visitor. Faust knows well how demons surround the human path, but he has never yet been their slave, and will not be so now. He defies the power he never felt.

#### CARE.

Feel it then now ; as thou shalt find,  
 When with a curse from thee I've wended :  
 Through their whole lives are mortals blind —  
 So be thou, Faust, ere life be ended !  
 (*She breathes on him and blinds him.*)

The German word is *Sorge*. "Care" (the short convenient monosyllable) is the accepted translation. But *Care* is not altogether satisfactory. It is apt to suggest (what Bayard Taylor indeed approves) the notion of Worry. But it is scarcely worry that the poet intends to personify here. We want some less definite and larger notion if possible. Why should Worry at this very moment and for the first time in his life haunt Faust? *Vague apprehension* seems to be

closer to the point. If I even ventured to propose Dread I don't think I should be very far from the spirit of the scene. The spectre represents itself as haunting the ordinary man throughout his whole life, disturbing present enjoyment and always making him throw his glance into the future, clouding his inner vision, and so bereaving him of the power of effective action. The words seem to declare (and the fact that Care blinds Faust supports this view) that its chief function is that of darkening the vision. It is that nameless shadow which is thrown upon our spirits, how or why we know not, but which is an accompaniment of even the keenest intellectual light. In meaner minds it no doubt takes the shape of gross personal fears for the morrow; in minds of a higher order of culture it may be the shifting cloud of ambition which forbids an aspiring nature to be ever contented; in another order of intelligence it is that sense of insecurity that makes one feel that what to most others is solid earth is but a treacherous quicksand. But Faust has never been troubled by these fears under any form, his arm has never been paralyzed by any vague phantom thrown from the unseen. The demonic forces which have always surrounded him (it is true) have been recognized by him as a part of the established order—he has spoken with spirit as spirit—the spirits are of this world only, spirits who should do his bidding, not be theirs, palpable and pliant. And now

when he is on the verge of the grave, and the one great opportunity occurs for the gaunt spectre of Dread to take him into her power, when his eye is becoming dim and his hearing indistinct, in this very moment when the enemy does her worst, Faust's whole nature, instead of being overpowered, rallies for a last effort,

The night seems deeper now to press around me.  
 But in my inmost spirit all is light ;  
 I rest not till the finished work hath crowned me  
 God's word alone confers on me the might.  
 Up from your couches, vassals, man by man !  
 Make grandly visible my daring plan !  
 Seize now your tools, with spade and shovel press !  
 The work traced out must be a swift success.  
 Quick diligence, severest ordering,  
 The most superb reward shall bring ;  
 And, that the mighty work completed stands,  
 One mind suffices for a thousand hands.—T.

The scene changes to the forecourt of the palace. Faust's call for labour has been heard. The overseer comes leading his well-trained band, armed with spades and pickaxes. Faust's cry in the night, which follows on the spectral blinding, has been heard by spectres alone—the overseer and his men are Mephistopheles and his skeleton Lemures.

The scene I am coming to has been pronounced to be without a parallel in any language. Its unique character consists in this, that it blends the sublime and the grotesque, the loftiest and the meanest thought,

the purest aspiration and the vilest craving, into a consistent whole. The contrasts are so judiciously presented, the light and gloom in all their brilliancy or ghastliness so whirled together as one may say, that, as in a thaumatrope, the picture is perfect, though composed of such different and even coarse colours.

## MEPHISTOPHELES.

This way ! this way ! Come on ! come on !  
Ye Lemures, loose of tether,  
Of tendon, sinew, and of bone,  
Half natures, patched together !

LEMURES (*in chorus*).

At thy behest we're here at hand ;  
Thy destined aim half-guessing—  
It is that we a spacious land  
May win for our possessing.

## MEPHISTOPHELES.

As for our sires was done of yore,  
An oblong square delve ye once more.  
Out of the palace to the narrow home—  
So at the last the sorry end must come !—S.

The Lemures commence digging, singing the remarkable ditty (with variations) of the old English poet Lord Vaux, to whom our own Shakespeare was also indebted.

In youth when I did live and love,  
Methought, it was very sweet !  
Where frolic rang and mirth was rife.  
Thither still sped my feet.



But now old Age, the spiteful one,  
 Hath clawed me with his crutch :  
 I stumbled over the door of a grave ;  
 Why leave they open such ?<sup>1</sup>

And groping his way along, knowing no more whether it be day or night, but cheered by the seemingly ready response to his commands, Faust comes from the palace. He calls "Surveyor." Mephistopheles answers, and receives the order to press on this new work with his utmost speed. Let as many labourers as possible be procured, let extra pay be given, and news brought him from day to day how the work proceeds. And when this design is accomplished, there will still remain a last and great effort, the crowning work of his long life. He sees not the

<sup>1</sup> Reminiscences of verses of "A Dyttye or Sonet made by the Lord Vaux, in time of the Noble Queene Marye, rep'sentinge the Image of Death."

I loathe that I did love,  
 In youth that I thought sweet :  
 As time requireth for my behove,  
 Methinks they are not meet

\* \* \* \*

For Age with stealing steps,  
 Hath clawde me with his crutch,  
 And lusty youth away he leaps.  
 As there had been none such.

[See "Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library. Edited by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart," 1872.]

Goethe had probably seen the poem in Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry."

flickering torches, the mocking imps at his elbow are invisible,—he only sees his own dream, but that kindles him with a rare enthusiasm.

Below the hills a marshy plain  
 Infects what I so long have been retrieving ;  
 This stagnant pool likewise to drain  
 Were now my latest and my best achieving.  
 To many millions let me furnish soil,  
 Though not secure, yet free to active toil ;  
 Green, fertile fields, where men and herds go forth  
 At once, with comfort, on the newest earth.  
 And swiftly settled on the hill's firm base,  
 Created by the bold, industrious race.  
 A land like Paradise here, round about :  
 Up to the brink the tide may roar without,  
 And though it gnaw, to burst with force the limit,  
 By common impulse all unite to hem it.  
 Yes! to this thought I hold with firm persistence ;  
 The last result of wisdom stamps it true :  
 He only earns his freedom and existence,  
 Who daily conquers them anew.  
 Thus here, by dangers girt, shall glide away  
 Of childhood, manhood, age, the vigorous day :  
 And such a throng I fain would see,—  
 Stand on free soil among a people free !  
 Then dared I hail the Moment fleeing :  
 " Ah, still delay—thou art so fair !"  
 The traces cannot, of mine earthly being,  
 In aeons perish—they are there !—  
 In proud fore-feeling of such lofty bliss,  
 I now enjoy the highest Moment—this !

(FAUST sinks back : the LEMURES take him and lay him  
 upon the ground.)—T.

All is over.

Time conquers—lies the old man on the sand!  
The clock stands still—

CHORUS.

Stands still! silent as midnight, now!  
The index falls.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

It falls, 'tis finished now.

CHORUS.

'Tis past!

The same drama is ever being re-enacted, the created returns to its primal nothingness, fresh flowers will bloom to-morrow and the day after will decay, and so recurs the endless ebb and flow of the eternal tide. Even Faust's now-gained land with its precious freight will have its term too; it is but a question of a little more or a little less,—the ocean will roll again where it rolled before. Better, says Mephistopheles, than this wearisome monotonous birth and death—the Eternal Emptiness!

The end, however, is not yet. First burial, then Resurrection. The Lemures proceed to lay the body in the grave—then the Prince of Evil will keep good watch to catch the soul as it emerges from its shell and claim his prey. Faust has become the prize of Mephistopheles. Although it had to be long waited for, yet the fatal day came at last when the old insatiable one desired to arrest the fleeting moment, and,

according to the pact, that moment should be Faust's last, and thenceforth he should be the Devil's servant. The first part of the bargain has been duly carried out. Faust's physical organs have ceased to play. They are indeed no longer needed. Existence was given just to attain a perfect moment, to realize an idea, and that attained, if there must be after-life, a new body must be framed through which to manifest a higher thought. But the soul? As Baucis moaned over the lost simplicity of the good old times of earth, so Mephistopheles bewails the greater complexity and vagueness of spiritual affairs. Once it was easy enough to catch the departing soul. The breath had no sooner left the body than all the Devil had to do was to snatch his prey, and hale it off to his limbo, to be kept safe for evermore. But now the *when*, the *where*, the *how*, are all obscure. The time is either prolonged or shortened into the indefinite; and then its locality is by no means so certain as it was—does the Psyche reside in the brain, or the inferior regions, or in some inconspicuous gland? And then, if its spiritual and temporal conditions are understood, there still remains the difficulty how to lay hold of it. Once the Devil alone was equal to the task, now he requires a whole army of assistants—devils short and devils tall, devils fat and devils lean—the ministers of the infernal of every degree, from the proclaimer of a coarse material damnation down to the most re-

finest exponent of the doctrine of hell-fire of the very broadest church. In readiness for the inevitable termination, however, Hell now opens on the left.

But, while the demons are watching with eager eyes, a stream of dazzling light illumines the midnight sky on the right, and voices of an invisible host concealed in the glory are heard, tones unpleasing enough to the arch-fiend, mawkish sentimental strumming, he calls it, from half-boyish, half-girlish hypocrites. But (those who strew invisible) a shower of roses now descends from above, falling thick and fast, not only into the open grave, but also upon the ugly guard. Round the cheerless grave they soon form a bright border of cool refreshing beauty, but falling on the devils they scorch and burn, so that the whole troop is thrown into the greatest consternation, and they cower and leap hither and thither to avoid the fatal shower. Mephistopheles impotently rages, but they will not heed him—still fall thick the roses, and the hideous crew presently plunges headlong into the yawning gulf on the left, leaving their leader to brave the heavenly storm alone.<sup>1</sup> But the celestial roses burn Mephistopheles also from head to foot yet more

<sup>1</sup> Koch, in the "Goethe-Jahrbuch" for 1884, vol. v., p. 322, calls attention to Payne Collier's account of "one of the ablest Morals [Moralities or Moral-Plays] in our language," entitled "The Castle Perseverance," in which there is a conflict of good and

terribly than his imps, so that his whole body is one glowing flame. And now the hitherto invisible band descends, and gradually fills the space previously occupied by the fiends, pressing Mephistopheles further and further from the grave. But the rosy shower has had a spiritual effect upon the arch-fiend. The rain of love which was to revive the sleeping soul still swathed in material bands has affected the soul of Mephistopheles also, has dragged out of his cold stony heart the utmost that it was capable of, a passion of the lowest sensuous kind. The beautiful angelic troop charm his lustful eyes, and in his vile fascination turning, though with pain, to look round upon them, he is more and more forgetful of his proper aim. Collecting himself with difficulty, he observes that his body is covered with loathsome boils, but extinguished are the hot internal fires, and so he curses the whole train.

evil powers for the allegorical "holder of the fort." The passage runs: "*Humanum Genus*, in a state of considerable alarm, calls on 'the Duke that died on rood' to take care of his soul. The Deadly Sins are defeated, and it appears from their complaint that they suffered most from roses flung at them from the walls by Charity, Patience, &c., which struck them hard enough to make them 'blak and blo.'"—"History of English Dramatic Poetry," 1831, vol. ii., p. 284. The coincidence is curious, yet the date of the appearance of Collier's work (June, 1831) precludes the possibility of suggestion to Goethe from that quarter. "The Castle of Perseverance," it should be added, only exists in MS., and received literary notice first from Collier.

But while he curses the angel-choir sings :—

Whom ye with hallow'd glow,  
Pure fires, o'erbrood,  
Blest in love's overflow,  
Lives with the good.  
Singing with voices clear,  
Soar from beneath ;  
Pure is the atmosphere,  
Breathe, spirit, breathe !—S.

Mephistopheles, looking round, sees the court deserted and the grave empty. He has nothing for it now but to curse himself. He, the old crafty Enemy, to have let himself be beguiled in this way, to have been tempted into the babyish folly of admiring these chits and forgetting his great object ! No, the sharp clever Devil never learns wisdom—the worldly egoist who thinks himself the most experienced and far-sighted is the greatest dolt, the invariably self-deluded.<sup>1</sup>

Although Mephistopheles sees himself outwitted, and imagines himself defrauded, he had really not won but lost his wager. Faust signed away his soul on the condition that Mephistopheles should procure him a moment of bliss sufficient to make him declare that he would wish to linger lazily in such happiness for evermore.

<sup>1</sup> For the origin of this scene, see letter to the painter Friedrich Müller, 21st June. 1781.

If e'er upon my couch stretched at my ease I'm found,  
Then may my life that instant cease!  
Me with joy's lure canst thou beguile,  
Let that day be for me the last!  
Be this our wager.

Faust has not lost, but gained the day, for two reasons—first, because it is not Mephistopheles who has brought his bliss; secondly, because that bliss was not a bliss of ease, but a bliss of the fullest activity. *Mephistopheles* certainly did not help him to the rapture he felt at the fatal moment—on the contrary, it came as a consequence of his unaided effort. Mephistopheles had done his last service when he burnt the cottage of Philemon, but it was Faust's own suggested scheme which exerted the final fascination. Again, it was no moment of passive enjoyment which he pronounced so fair. It was no present moment at all. It was a vision of a remote future when he would be merely spectator of the realized development of the most powerful creative word of his whole life. An actively free people, working on soil which he with full conscious activity had procured for them—such was the dream which he beheld translated into fact in this remote future that brought him the perfect moment. The spiritual conclusion of the wager the author, however, chooses to represent under the form of a contest between the imps of darkness and the angels of light, between the spirit of hate and the spirit of love. Faust would be misjudged after death,



as Goethe has been misjudged by that mean spirit of the world which cannot see beneath the surface into the vast social endeavour of the supreme artist. To the commonplace eye he lived only for self-satisfaction, and wrought no pure deed of blessing for his fellow-men. But loving hearts claim their own and bear away, before a mocking crowd whose love is vile, the immortal spirit whose deeds ever gained in depth and breadth as life advanced, whose better nature was wrought out surely as a slowly-forming gem, and had earned the heaven of loving memory. Faust had baffled Mephistopheles all his life because his self-expression was not the self-satisfaction the fiend had intended,—it was not self-indulgence, but self-development, self-progress, an ever-expanding self, which furthered the life of a larger and larger circle of mankind. The world seems as incapable as ever of understanding *this* egoism, an egoism which includes altruism, the egoism which is rooted in the very heart of things, which is exhibited in the personal devotion of the genuine lover, in the sublime self-assertion of a world-saviour.

Between Earth and Heaven is no unfilled interval. The peaks of Montserrat shoot up into the rarefied atmosphere, and the rarer air shades by imperceptible gradation into the subtile ether where dwell the perfected angels. Dedicated anchorites occupy cells,

at varying altitudes, overlooking deep ravines, and their united chant, as it winds among the rocks, is flung back in echo. From the lowest abyss to the loftiest cloud-wrapped summit is hovering the saint named the Ecstatic, spirit among spirits. The martyr-agony is welcome to him, if only the darts and flames beat into nothingness every trace of earthly dross, and leave him only the life-in-death of blameless love. Pater Profundus is in the lowest region of all. He hears the crashing torrent with its echoing thunder, and sees the awful lightning riving the pines, but Nature's activity, however awful, but speaks a message of Divine love. His prayer is that this probation of gloom may be anon exchanged for an abode more penetrated by the heavenly ray. In the middle region the Seraphic Father has his dwelling. The air is far purer here, and though the torrent be still heard, the sound comes muffled to the ear, and the foliage impedes the view far less. He observes a cloud floating upward from the lower region, and voices from it reach him :—

Whither, father, are we hieing,  
Tell us, kind one, who are we ?  
Happy are we upward flying.  
Unto all 'tis bliss to be.

It is a band of blessed boys, who quitted earth as soon as they were born, and merely possess the conscious-

ness of existence, but no organs of material apprehension,—souls pervaded only by a feeling of buoyant gladness. The Seraphic Father takes them into himself, that they may use his organs of perception to learn the nature of the world they have so soon quitted. But a brief view suffices them,—earth appears all so dark and dreary to them, and they pray to be released. The father speeds them on their upward journey, and holding one another's hands they rise in circles joyfully to the mountain's summit. And now in the upper atmosphere a bright convoy comes sweeping along, guarding some precious burden, singing in full chorus:—

Saved is this noble soul from ill,  
 Our spirit-peer. Who ever  
 Strives forward with unswerving will—  
 Him can we aye deliver :  
 And if with him celestial love  
 Hath taken part—to meet him  
 Come down the angels from above :  
 With cordial hail they greet him.—S.

The younger angels tell of the rosy shower from the hand of fair penitents which won the victory, the more perfect angels adding a lament that the immortal part still bears such traces of its earthly origin, that it is hard to support the weight. And now the blessed boys in their upward soaring meet the angel-convoy, who hand their charge over to them, that

he may receive from them his first lessons of spirit-life.

The occupant of the highest cell, Doctor Marianus, catches a glimpse of a starry wreath descending into the ether encircling a dazzling glory. It is the Mater Gloriosa, and the cloud-wreath pressing gently round her is a band of penitents. The Mater Gloriosa floats nearer, and three fair ones stand out from the angel-crowd—Mary Magdalene, who anointed the Saviour's feet; the Samaritan woman who begged a draught from the well whose waters stilled thirst for evermore; and the wilful Mary of Alexandria, who, after seventeen years of intemperate living, sought the Holy Sepulchre, and was thrust back by an invisible arm, then retired into the desert for eight and forty years, and wrote her parting prayer on the sand. The three (forgiven long ago) are now begging audience for a later wanderer, who once, in far other scenes, put up her heartrending prayer for mercy to the same queen, whom she then knew as Mater Dolorosa, or Mother of Sorrows. But the face is not now tear-stained, and the spirit, oblivious of her own need of remission, entreats:—

Incline, oh, incline,  
All others excelling,  
In glory aye dwelling,  
Unto my bliss thy glance benign!  
The loved one, ascending,

His long trouble ending,  
Comes back, he is mine!—S.

The blessed boys, encircling their charge, are approaching. Already have they taught all they knew (so swiftly does the new-comer grow), and they now implore that he, the much-experienced, may be *their* teacher:—

Dying ere we could reach  
Earth's pain or pleasure ;  
What he hath learned he'll teach  
In ample measure.

But the glorified Gretchen in wonder, delight, and love cannot any longer repress herself:—

Encircled by the choirs of heaven,  
Scarcely himself the stranger knows ;  
Scarcely feels the existence newly given,  
So like the heavenly host he grows.  
See, how he every band hath riven !  
From earth's old vesture freed at length,  
Now clothed upon by garb of heaven,  
Shines forth his pristine youthful strength.  
To guide him, be it given to me ;  
Still dazzles him the new-born day.

MATER GLORIOSA.

Ascend, thine influence feeleth he,  
He'll follow on thine upward way.—S.

Our story is at an end. Let us try to gather up the broken threads, and hold the clue firmly for a few minutes. The theme of the drama of "Faust" is the

*Trial and Triumph of Man.* Immaterial whether we think of the individual or the race, the story is the same—Faust is the colossal man, Faust is the long spiritual history of our planet. In many forms the thought has been expressed; but, whatever language may have been employed, every deeper philosophy has conceived the human fate as the struggle of two natures,—the one positive, asserting, desiring expansion,—the other limiting and restricting. Mephistopheles asks of the Creator permission to engage in a contest with the positive Ideal, to reduce it to ever meaner proportions, to drag it into the abyss of nothingness. The Creator grants permission, grants because he must. If there is to be movement at all, and not perennial rest, the Idea must enter the swathing-bands of Space and Time, must struggle through the darkness of a vague sentience into the full light of self-knowledge. Organic growth means incarnation and re-spiritualization.

We see, then, Faust, the blind giant, in his corporeal dungeon, calling for light and freedom. As he wakes to self-consciousness he finds himself cramped on every hand, and every outlook barred. He must get free, must satisfy his aspirations, must have room to expand. But the conditions of developing existence do not permit unlimited movement. Under whatever name it be known—body, order, law—chains, even though they be of gossamer, hold

him even when he knows it least. But the pure Idea has a measure of liberty, and hence the human orb sways now this side, now that, from the perfect ellipse—

Man still must err while he doth strive.

It is only by a process of repeated trial that the right path is ascertained—until that is found the half-enlightened nature brings misery to itself and many others. Thinking to gain joy, it reaps pain, and longing to bless, it irremediably wounds. And, deepest tragedy of all, the most confiding are often the most complete victims. But every fall is a gain, every tragedy enacted makes the chance less of the occurrence of a tragedy. Humanity outgrows the age of pure animalism. It henceforth demands a tinge of the ideal in the beauty which is to attract it, and after many attempts to possess the goddess herself, it strives to fix the essence of the beautiful, which always seems to elude it at the last grasp, in objective Art. But Art, as a material, technical realization, remains something external,—it is a stage on the march, not the goal. It leaves a garment for the embellishment of every practical age; but beyond the art of form is the real art of the sculptured soul. The Art of life is the Art of arts; an art, however, which cannot be learnt in the solitary studio, but only in the collision and co-operation of the manifold human world. Faust becomes political worker, social con-

structor. But there is no such thing as pure gain, enough if the gain outweigh the loss. The wild forces of Nature and Man have to be subdued at the cost of much real worth and irreplaceable beauty. Blue rivers are polluted, and the air is darkened with dense murky clouds. But the gain is clear. The epicurean spirit which would have all the beauty preserved for a select few is a base spirit, for where in the olden time only a chosen aristocracy could enjoy the good things of life, now myriads are fed and clothed, and every fresh discovery is the opening up of a new world to the ever-expanding mind of man.

We have reached the Modern age. The art of Greece, the political wisdom of Rome, the religion of the Middle Age are left behind—we are in the full swing of the great commercial industrial era. And though a Faust of the nineteenth century must perforce die while the wastes of barbarism have not been all reclaimed, and many pestilential social pools are yet undrained, he rightly foresees the realization of his economic dream.

What shall come thereafter is only to be darkly scanned through the finest spiritual telescope. When our politics and social institutions have attained an approximately perfect form, when there is bread enough for all to eat, and the best science of the schools is a common possession, the end is still far off. The prophet's dream is yet unfulfilled (the age seems so



remote that we even jest at it), of a time when the last vestige of war and private competition shall have disappeared, when there is but one payment for every service, gratitude; one master over all, pure love. This is the Utopia, the last state, which is symbolized in the closing scene of our poem. That scene almost begins and ends with the word Love—from Pater Profundus to the final adoration of Doctor Marianus as the Glorious Queen soars far into heaven—every song has the same burden. Love is the only thing worth living for—all, all, is love. A German critic<sup>1</sup> has finely said, "The whole closing scene exhibits to us nothing else than a universal upward climbing of loving ones, to whom other loving ones offer their hands, so that a long chain is formed, the lowest link of which is on the earth, the highest in the loftiest region of heaven; the lowest link a man heavily burdened with the corporeal, the highest the Deity itself."—

While the ages have been proceeding, how has it fared with the freedom-craving mind? Well, all through the great drama the same truth shines clearly forth. Arrived at the age of Reason (the opening scene of our poem), when the insufficiency of traditional creeds is clear to the mind of Faust, when the conventional hell has lost its terrors and no argument is convincing to show that duty has any objective worth—arrived

<sup>1</sup> "Der zweite Theil des Goethe'schen Faust, erläutert von  
• Alexander Schmetger." 1858, p. 217.

at this stage the mind conceives itself liberated from all bondage whatsoever, that henceforth it is lord of its own fate. Faust now may do what he pleases; heaven and earth are his, whatever powers he can subdue to his will. This determination to walk henceforth by his own rule is typified by his recourse to enchantment, the attempted constraint of the demonic forces to his service. He will bind the powers of destiny to his car; his will shall set the law, and there shall be no God above him. This is the first conception of freedom, a freedom self-determined and claimed by supposed right of Being. Such freedom has its first glaring illustration in the tragedies which grow out of his early passion—then in the paralysis of Faust enamoured of the ideal Helena—in the ruin of Philemon and Baucis. The same tale is told in other forms and with other actors—the revel of the students in Auerbach's cellar, the miserable end of Gretchen, the blazing court of King Pan, the audacious flight and fall of Euphorion. Following the career of Faust, we see how step by step he becomes aware that this notion of freedom is false—that the individual soul is incompetent to map out its destiny. In his own words :—

- I've craved, accomplished, and then craved again;  
Thus through my life I've stormed—with might and main,  
Grandly, with power, at first; but now indeed
- It goes more cautiously, with wiser heed.

And so at last he takes the only really free step. Though tempted more sorely than ever, he refuses to speak a word of enchantment, will no longer take his destiny into his own hands,—but resigns himself to the higher law of the Universe. From that moment, when the world of sense loses its charm, when its beauties no longer ravish his sight, the true light flashes in upon him. Though physically helpless, he is morally strong, and he sees that, instead of having been master of the world-spirit, he has really been its slave, confesses that the one aim of his life, the largest measure of liberty, can alone be acquired by a steady widening of the sphere of action, within the bounds of duty :—

Yea, to this thought I cling, with virtue rife,  
Wisdom's last fruit, profoundly true :  
Freedom alone he earns as well as life,  
Who day by day must conquer them anew.

The individual has no further lesson to learn, and he dies. What will ensue when this truth is fully realized is shown in the last scene, where there is a combination of the most complete freedom with the most thorough service. The reign of perfect law is also the reign of perfect love.—

The poem of “Faust” then is an allegory, a great mystery-play—it is a transcript in our human dialect of that picture-poem which is being unceasingly made by the eternal artist. The highest truths can only be

uttered darkly, in parable—as the changing shapes of time are but adumbrations of the nature and purpose of the purely Real.

Each work of genius tells its tale differently, according to the mind of the admirer. For myself, I hear this echo in every part:—Aspiration, not attainment, is the lot of man; and aspiration is only born of surrender to that spirit of unselfish beauty which in its manifold earthly disguises is still ever of the heaven heavenly. And so the Mystic Chorus of a perfect world aptly rounds off this grand work.

Alles Vergänglichhe  
Ist nur ein Gleichniss,  
Das Unzulängliche,  
Hier wird's Ereigniss;  
Das Unbeschreibliche,  
Hier ist es gethan.  
Das Ewig-Weibliche  
Zieht uns hinan.

All of mere transient date  
As symbol showeth:  
Here, the inadequate  
To fulness groweth,  
The Indescribable.  
Here it is done:  
The Woman-Soul leadeth us  
Upward and on!—S. and T.



## APPENDIX A.

### ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF "FAUST."

THE following translations of "Faust" have come under my notice. A few others will be found mentioned in Heinemann's "Bibliographical List of the English Translations and Annotated Editions of Goethe's 'Faust.'" (Elliot Stock.)

1. *Faustus: From the German of Goethe.* London. 1821.

The author of this version, instead of rendering the original, sometimes has recourse to a prose paraphrase and gloss. Thus, in lieu of the well-known dialogue between Faust and Margaret on the matter of religious faith, we read as follows:—

"*Margaret.* 'It is long since you have been to mass or confession. Do you believe in God?' *Faustus* replies to this interrogation by one of those mystical definitions of belief in God which characterizes the professors of natural religion. *Margaret* however, notwithstanding her girlish simplicity, has too much good sense to be imposed upon by general professions of faith calculated to cover any kind of religious creed."

2. *Faust ; A Drama, by Goethe. And Schiller's Song of the Bell. Translated by Lord Francis Leveson Gower. London. 1823.*

The translator modestly says, "I have left sundry passages unattempted, where I was convinced of my own inability to transfer their spirit to a translation : " and, "considerations of decency have also, in a few instances, prevented me from proceeding." The Dialogue in Heaven is omitted from reasons of propriety, and also the "Scene at the Well ;" and part of the Walpurgis Night, from "Die Hexen zu dem Brocken ziehen " to "Wer fragt darnach in einer Schäferstunde " for both reasons. The translation often reads well, but is disfigured by occasional inelegancies, *e.g.*—

'Tis true, with years of science ten,  
A teacher of my fellow men,  
Above, below, and round about,  
I draw my scholars by the snout.

3. *Faustus, A Tragedy. [Part I.] Translated from the German of Goethe. London. 1834.*

A blank verse translation. The Prologues are omitted ; that in Heaven because "I cannot but think that the tone of levity with which it treats matters of the most sacred nature must be repugnant to English feelings."

4. *The Faust of Goethe ; Part the First. Translated into English Rhyme, by the Honourable Robert Talbot. Second Edition, Revised and Corrected, with the German Text on Alternate Pages. London. 1839.*

- Dedicated to Carlyle. Inferior.

5. *Faust, A Tragedy, in Two Parts, by Göthe. Rendered into English Verse. 2 vols. London. 1838.*

Translated with considerable intelligence, though with not a little freedom. There is a rhymed introduction (echo of Lord Byron's "Don Juan") :—

Here, perhaps, I'd best slide in the reason, why  
I cumber with my own rhymes this translation.  
Namely, that 'tis the shortest way, which I  
Could devise, to give such fitting explanation  
As seemed advisable, by way of chorus ;  
And to save preface, notes, concordances,  
Wherewith 'tis much the custom now to bore us,  
Which, oftener than the worth, the bulk enhances

Man's triune nature shadowed forth one sees  
In Gretchen, Faust, and Mephistophiles :  
The INTELLECTUAL, to the gods that links him ;  
The SENSUAL, that midst dust and demons sinks him :  
The MORAL, blending purity and love,  
Guileless, unselfish, with forgiveness teeming.  
Beautifying, sanctifying, all-redeeming,  
Drawing his spirit to the realms above.

And shadowed forth is that great mystery, too,  
Matter's and Spirit's union . . . .  
But in the third place : shadowed forth we see  
The phases of man's social history . . . .

6. *Goethe's Faust, Part II. Translated from the German, partly in the metres of the original and partly in prose. By Leopold J. Bernays. London. 1839.*

Very unsatisfactory.

7. *Faust : A Tragedy, by J. Wolfgang von Goethe. Translated into English Verse by J. Birch, Esq. London and Leipzig. 1839.*



*Faust: A Tragedy, in two parts, by J. Wolfgang von Goethe. The Second Part. Translated into English Verse by Jonathan Birch, Esq. London. 1843.*

The translator possesses no true gift for poetical translation. The flow and terse vigour of the original are often sadly missing. Too fond of out-of-the-way terms, or the coinage of his own mint—"By fortune choused," "shb fell, she is thirl'd," "serpentess," "pleasancing," "lustlings." Occasionally quite incorrect, as:—

Returned from fields and upland path,  
Now under deepest night's controul,  
*Presentment of heavenly wrath!*  
Awakens up our better soul—

8. *Faust. A Tragedy, by Goethe. Translated into English Verse by John Hills, Esq. London and Berlin. 1840.*

The "Prologue in Heaven" omitted, and only that—"Coarseness we may defend . . . . But the defence of only *seeming* profanity is a harder and more ungrateful task."

9. *Faust. A Tragedy. By Goethe. Translated by Lewis Filmore. London. 1841.*

The Spirit-Song poorly done. ("Voice from within *Henri! Henri!*")

10. *Faust. A Tragedy. Part the Second. Rendered from the German of Goethe, by Archer Gurney. London. 1842.*

Note to Act III. :—"Time and Space in this act exist no more. Faust has reversed the laws of Nature. He has delivered Helena from Orcus, and now meets her in a

world of visions. The metres of the original have been closely followed." Translated often with much freedom.

11. *Faust, A Tragedy by J. W. Goethe. Part II. as completed in 1831. Translated into English Verse. Second Edition. London. 1842.*

• "It may be stated, that this present publication is rather intended as a literal transference from the German to English, maintaining the rhythm of the original, than as an attempt at elegant versification."—Preface, p. viii. Curious is the following,—

"The Virgin Eternal"  
Leadeth us on.

• Das Ewig-Weibliche—the ever-compassionate,—the Virgin Mary."

12. *Goethe's Faust. Translated into English Verse. By Sir George Lefevre, M.D. Second Edition. Frankfurt O. M. 1843.*

First Part only. Poor.

13. *Faust, A Tragedy, By J. W. von Goethe. Translated by Captain Knox. London. 1847.*

First Part.

14. *Faust: A Dramatic Poem. By Goethe. Translated into English Prose, with Notes, By A. Hayward, Esq. Sixth Edition. London. 1855.*

The number of editions shows the popularity of this translation. It is exceedingly faithful, as a prose rendering always should, and alone can, be.

15. *Faust. A Tragedy translated from the German of Goethe, with notes, by Charles T. Brooks. Second Edition. Boston. 1857.*

I quite agree with the author's unfavourable remarks on prose translations of poetic masterpieces.

This is one of the best translations of the First part I have met with. The translator has caught the *verve* of the original.<sup>1</sup> It is a pity he did not attempt the Second Part.

16. *Faust: A Tragedy. Translated into English Verse from the German of Goethe. By John Galvan. Dublin. 1860.*

Part I. only.

17. *Faustus: The Second Part. From the German of Goethe. By John Anster, LL.D., M.R.I.A., Regius Professor of Civil Law in the University of Dublin. London. 1864.*

18. (Marlowe's *Faustus*.) *Goethe's Faust. From the German by John Anster, LL.D. With an Introduction by Henry Morley, LL.D., Professor of English Literature at University College, London. Third Edition. London. 1884.*

Not so good as that of Part II. Professor Morley writes that, "Dr. John Anster was the earliest translator of 'Faust' into English," i.e. of parts of the poem, in contributions to

<sup>1</sup> I am pleased to see from a remark in a recent article by Professor Horatio White that I am far from being singular in this judgment. Page 242 of "Goethe Jahrbuch," Bd. v., 1884, ". . . die metrische Wiedergabe des ersten Theiles von Faust die nach Ansicht Vieler diejenigen Taylor's gleichkommt." The fifteenth edition appeared in 1880 at Boston.

“Blackwood.” The whole First Part was not published till 1835.

Professor Morley remarks, “The feebler Second Part of ‘Faust’ . . . was an after-thought.” The “feebler” is matter of opinion, the “after-thought” distinctly untrue.

1<sup>st</sup>. *Translation of Goethe's Faust, First and Second Parts, by William Barnard Clarke, Architect. Freiburg. 1865.*

A preface in which the author is very free with his criticisms of his predecessors leads one to expect something superlatively excellent in the latest venture; but this translation of W. B. Clarke is simply atrocious. What ear for metre can a man have, not to speak of mere style, who prints:—

The sun as of old strikes out a tone  
 Rivalling with brother spheres around,  
 And his preordained course runs on  
 With thunder reverberating sound.  
 His glance gives angels powerful will,  
 Though none can fathom heavenly sway;  
 Th' unimaginable high works are still  
 Majestic as on the first day.

And quick with unimaginable flight  
 The grandeur of the Earth turns round;  
 It changes paradisiac light  
 For a deep night with horror bound;  
 In torrents broad, sea foam's upborne  
 From rocky deeps cavernous source.

It is evident Mr. Clarke is himself no poet.

Thus Time's noisy weaver's loom clattering I use,  
 And of life full the raiment of Godhead produce.

FAUST.

My beauteous miss, my I thee dare.  
 My ain and company with you to share?

## MARGARET.

I'm neither miss, nor beauteous,  
Can unassisted gain my house.

\* \* \* \* \*

Scarce to bewail know we aright,  
Envyng thee we sing thy fate :  
Thy song in times which shone so bright  
Was, as in clouded, beauteous, great.

\* \* \* \* \*

The indescribable  
Here has been shown,  
The feminine ever will  
Draw us high on.

"On the old boy from time to time to wait," is surely needlessly jocular.

20. *Faust. A Dramatic Poem. By Goethe. Translated by John Wynnatt Grant. London. 1867.*

Of no particular merit.

21. *Faust. A Dramatic Poem by Goethe. Translated into English Verse by Theodore Martin. Third Edition. Edinburgh and London. 1870.*

This translation has deservedly run through several editions.

22. *Faust. A Tragedy. By John Wolfgang von Goethe. Translated, in the original metres, by Bayard Taylor. The First Part. The Second Part. (Two Vols.) London. 1871.*

My high appreciation of this version is shown by the use I make of it in the body of the work. The poetical worth is not at the expense of fidelity.

23. *Faust : A Tragedy by Goethe. Translated in Rhyme by C. Kegan Paul. London. 1873.*

This is one of the fairly meritorious translations. Does not call for special comment.

24. *Faust. A Tragedy, by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The First Part. Translated, in the Original Metres, by Thomas James Arnold, Esq., F.S.A. (Metropolitan Police Magistrate, England.) With 50 Illustrations after original designs by Alexander Liezen Mayer, and with vignettes by Rudolf Seitz. Munich and London. 1877.*

25. *The Faust of Goethe. Part I. In English Verse. By W. H. Colquhoun. London. 1878.*

Not good.

26. *Faust. A Tragedy by J. W. von Goethe. Translated into English Verse by Charles Hartpole Bowen. London. 1878.*

“Forty years have well nigh elapsed since the following translation of ‘Faust’ was written. Put aside for so long a period it may well seem strange that it should now appear in print. The only reason for this that the writer has to give, is a desire to save any friends who may hereafter care to read it the trouble of perusing a manuscript.”

This translation goes to the other extreme to Mr. Clarke.

Than thus to see *The Father*, and a word  
To have with him at times, I might do worse.

Not ill-executed, in parts.

27. *Faust. A Tragedy. By Goethe. Translated into English Verse by William Dalton Scoones, B.A. London. 1879.*

An unpretentious little volume. Mr. Scoones has succeeded better than many of his predecessors in giving the spirit of the original without departing widely from the text.

28. *Goethe's Faust. In Two Parts. Translated by Anna Swanwick, Translator of Æschylus, etc. London. 1879.*

I have taken the liberty to quote from Miss Swanwick's version freely, both on account of its intrinsic excellence as noted in the text, and also because it is the one which English students are most likely to procure. It is contained in Bohn's "Standard Library."

29. *Faust. A Tragedy by Goethe. Translated chiefly in Blank Verse, with Introduction and Notes, by James Adey Bird, B.A., F.G.S. London. 1880.*

Only Part I. Mr. Bird writes in his preface as if that were the entire work.

"As to the translation of 'Faust' in general, it is my conviction that it should be in verse, and, moreover, in blank verse," the reason offered being that the English language is capable of yielding something more than a prose equivalent, but unequal to a full verse equivalent. While granting the truth of this statement, I still think that a spirited translation in the original metres conveys the spirit of the poem better than any other vehicle. The translator has not rigidly adhered to his theory in practice. Had he abandoned it altogether, he could have produced, I believe, a better translation than he has done.

30. *Faust: A Tragedy by Goethe. Translated into English Verse, with notes and preliminary remarks, by John Stuart Blackie, Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh. London. 1880.*

Part I. There are worse translations than that of Professor Blackie, but I had expected something still better from the writer's reputation.

31. *Faust, from the German of Goethe.* By Thos. E. Webb, LL.D., *Regius Prof. of Laws and Pub. Orator in the University of Dublin.* Dublin and London. 1880.

First part only.

"The desire of the English people to naturalize the great German poet is unabated after forty efforts. It will never cease till it is satisfied; and it will never be satisfied till, under some happy conjunction of the planets, an English translator appears who has converted the German masterpiece into an English poem." P. xxxvi.



## APPENDIX B.

### THE MOTHERS.

**I**N the "Archiv für Litteraturgeschichte," edited by Dr. Franz Schnorr von Carolsfeld, are two very suggestive articles by Paul Hohlfeld, in which the writer quotes copiously from the "Mathematische Philosophie" of Johann Jakob Wagner, published in 1811, to show that the essential parts of Goethe's description of the Mothers were borrowed from that work. The articles alluded to are in the sixth and eleventh vols. respectively (1877 and 1882) of the "Archiv," and the references are certainly extremely curious. Wagner also published a "Wörterbuch der Platonischen Philosophie" in 1799, and under 'Υλκ there is a paraphrase of certain passages of the "Locrian Timæus," which gives rise to the further suggestion that Goethe may have drawn also from the earlier book of Wagner's, or from the Platonic "Timæus" itself. (In 1763 appeared "Timée de Locres, en Grec, et en François," par M. le Marquis d'Argens.)

I can only translate a few of the passages quoted or referred to by Hohlfeld, and must refer the reader who finds

the resemblances insufficient, to the articles themselves, or Wagner's works.

"Wörterbuch der Plat. Phil.," p. 182; "Tim. Locr.," 93. "All is either intelligible substance (*ἰδέα*), or substrate of real objects (*αἰσθητόν*). The former is eternal, invariable, persistent, identical, and archetype of everything sensible. We call it Idea, and cognize it through the pure activity of our own mind. The other, however, Matter, is as it were the Mother and Support of all Appearance. In it (an derselben) arises and disappears everything; it is, as it were, the wax in which all phenomena or imprinted images arise and are extinguished. This Matter is indeed invisible, but not invariable (*ἀμείωτος*). In itself it is formless, although it comprehends all forms. . . . The two original entities (Urdinge) are opposed to one another. The one (the Idea) is to be regarded as masculine and as Stammvater; Matter, however, as feminine, and as Mother."

Mephistopheles says, "Nach ihrer Wohnung magst in's Tiefste schürfen." Wagner, "Math. Phil.," p. 178, "Deep is Being." "The Profound is the Mother of all figures, but *itself without figure*. In it all figures are resolved." Mephistopheles says, "Nichts wirst du sehn in ewig leerer Ferne." "Math. Phil.," p. 251, "Life, because it lies beyond the point and the circle, has no hieroglyph or number. If it is to have a hieroglyph or symbol, one would have to indicate it as a void without outline (Universe)." *Faust*: "In deinem Nichts hoff' ich das All zu finden." "Math. Phil.," p. 25, "Thus Zero (or the Circle) is the developed All (*Pan*)." "The key to the 'Key,' which is repeatedly mentioned and is handed over by Mephistopheles to Faust, can hardly be other than Wagner's spacial fundamental schema, the rectangular

isosceles cross + " (Hohlfeld). Key occurs frequently in Wagner. (No explanation is offered of the *Tripod*.)

The Mothers are said, "some to sit, others to stand, or move." All these terms are used by Wagner of the forms of solid geometry. Hohlfeld remarks (vol. xi., p. 399), "The standing Mothers (*i.e.*, Things, Elements) are manifestly the earthly elements; the moving, the fiery."

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